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beauty of blossom

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editor's letter

I have two memories of Arundel, the market town in West Sussex dominated by an impressive medieval castle. As a child, it was where I learned to swim. Coached by the fearsome Mr Prescott in an open-air pool, I would splash up and down with the sight of the castle on the hill a constant in my attempts to keep my head above water. My other memory is of an afternoon sitting watching the cricket in the idyllic grounds just beyond the castle's imposing flint knap walls. Now I have a new association – Arundel's magnificent Tulip Festival, with the castle providing a suitably dramatic backdrop to the displays. On page 40, the castle's head gardener Martin Duncan picks some of his favourite tulips found amid the 36,000 planted in myriad arrangements throughout the castle grounds. It's an inspiring selection and one that helps to define the exuberance of spring. Another of spring's key markers is blossom. In Japan, crowds gather to picnic beneath the brimming branches of cherry blossom in *hanami* celebrations. On page 74, we give a selection of recipes to encourage you to enjoy your own blossom-appreciation occasion. Also in this issue, we return to designer Mary Keen's Cotswold garden (page 50) to see how winter has given way to spring with a soft, fresh green clothing the garden. With Easter in the middle of April this year, we can look forward to a flower-filled holiday weekend and I hope the various spring displays we have highlighted in this issue give you plenty to admire and consider for your own gardens.

Sorrel

SORREL EVERTON, ACTING EDITOR

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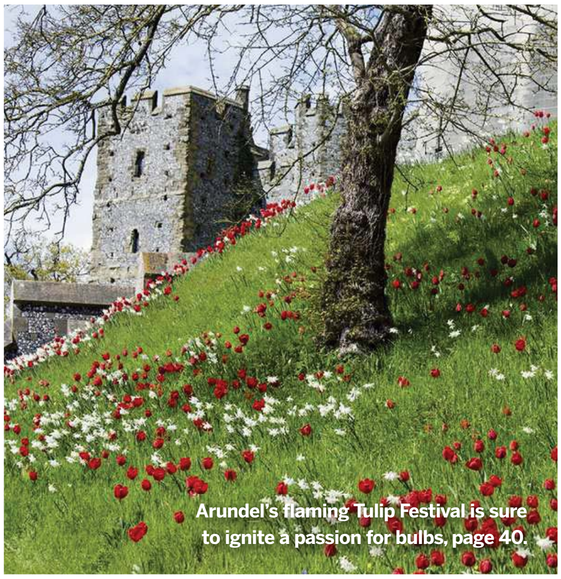
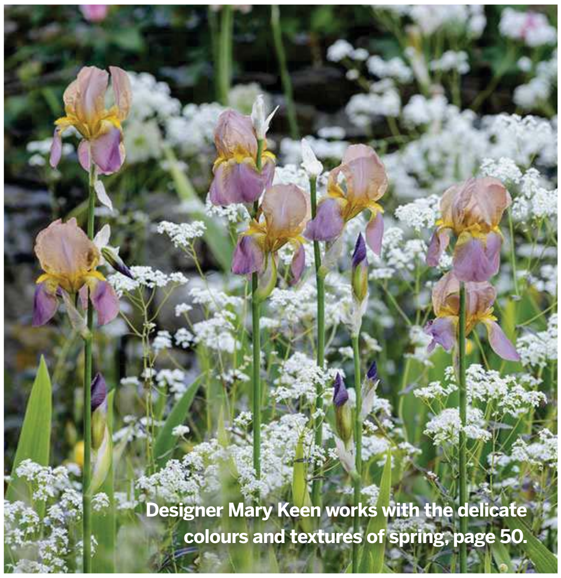


Arundel's flaming Tulip Festival is sure to ignite a passion for bulbs, page 40.



Designer Mary Keen works with the delicate colours and textures of spring, page 50.

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RACHEL WARNE, JASON INGRAM

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Arundel Castle tulips
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Rachel Warne

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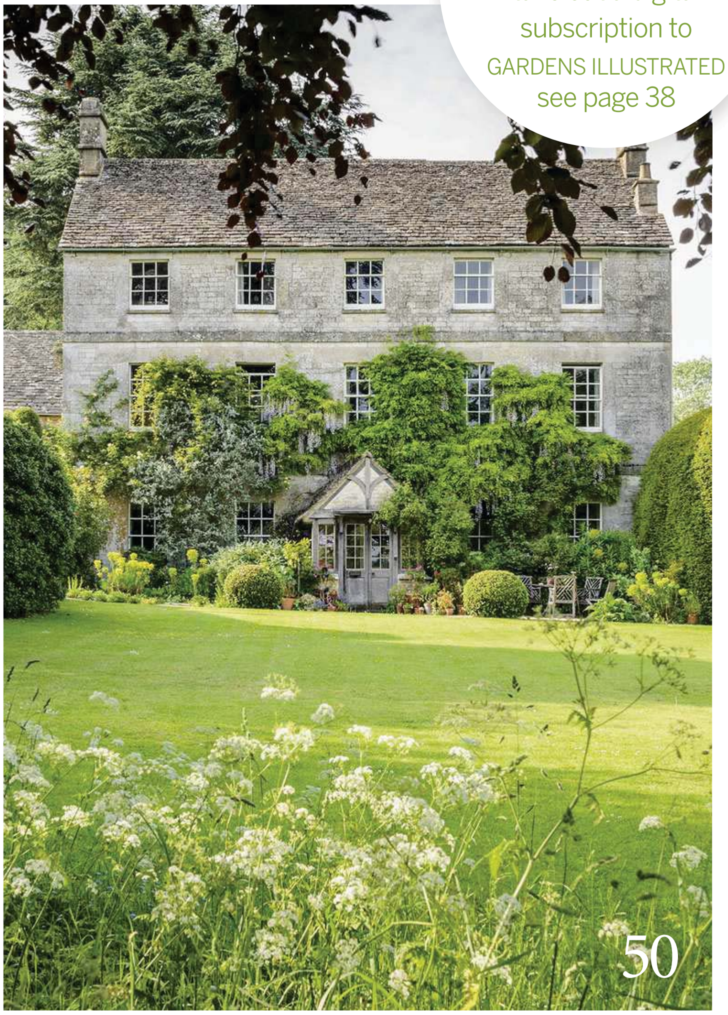
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RACHEL WARNE, JASON INGRAM

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contributors

CAMILLA SWIFT

Camilla enjoys nothing better than visiting, observing and learning from other people's gardens, particularly when this liberates her from the rigours of her own Welsh mountain plot. On page 40 she revels in Arundel Castle's breathtaking Tulip Festival in West Sussex.

"'Here tulips bloom as they are told,' wrote Rupert Brooke, which perfectly describes Arundel Castle's springtime extravaganza."

RACHEL WARNE

Londoner Rachel has been shooting gardens for the past 12 years, working with many of the talents of the garden world. She has won several awards and is working on her seventh book. On page 40 she captures the brilliance of head gardener Martin Duncan's way with tulips.

"Martin's enthusiasm, dedication and knowledge are reflected in the gardens at Arundel: a riot of colour that was a joy to shoot."

JASON INGRAM

Jason travels widely, photographing gardens, food and people. His many awards include Garden Media Guild Features Photographer of the Year 2016. This month he's been snapping blossom (page 74), Mary Keen's garden (page 50) and favourite plants (page 28).

"We had fun shooting Alys Hurn's blossom-inspired recipes; the flowering was perfectly timed and we had an excellent lunch!"

AMBRA EDWARDS

Ambra is an award-winning writer who adores writing about gardeners: who she says are always so passionate about what they do, and have such extraordinary tales to tell. And queen of camellias Jennifer Trehane, whom she interviews on page 80, is no exception.

"I loved meeting Jennifer – she's so full of energy and zest for life. We roared with laughter all day long."

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2nd Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN.

SYNDICATION & LICENSING

Gardens Illustrated is available for licensing and syndication.

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THIS MAGAZINE IS OWNED AND PUBLISHED BY IMMEDIATE MEDIA COMPANY BRISTOL

Standard subscription rates: UK £58.50 per annum; Eire and Europe £54.10 for 13 issues; rest of the world £64.95 for 13 issues. Distribution Frontline, Peterborough. US distribution Source IPD/Speedimpex. Email intlquery@seymour.co.uk Printed in the UK by William Gibbons Ltd. *Gardens Illustrated* (ISSN 0968-8920) (USPS 015-608) is published 13 times a year (monthly with a Special issue in December) by Immediate Media Company Bristol, 2nd Floor, Tower House, Fairfax St, Bristol BS1 3BN, UK. Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, LLC, 2 Corporate Drive, Ste. 945, Shelton, CT 06484. Periodical postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Gardens Illustrated*, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.

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The Great Dixter Cookbook

Plot to plate in the kitchen garden

Join Aaron Bertelsen, Great Dixter's gardener-cook to discover the secrets of a successful plot that provides ample ingredients for the kitchen

THE SPEAKER
Aaron Bertelsen grew up in New Zealand, where he helped his grandfather to grow vegetables. He went on to train at Kew and now works as Great Dixter's kitchen gardener and cook.

Back in 2001, the late Christopher Lloyd – gardener, writer and owner of Great Dixter in East Sussex – published *Gardener Cook* bringing together his two great passions and revealing his commitment to using simple ingredients and fresh, seasonal produce. Now, Aaron Bertelsen, Great Dixter's current gardener-cook, has collated a selection of recipes and growing advice in a new book *The Great Dixter Cookbook* (published by Phaidon) that brings the Dixter tradition of flavourful, fresh food to the fore once again.

To celebrate the book's publication, we invite readers to join Aaron for a day at Great Dixter to learn more about creating and maintaining a plot full of seasonal fruit and veg. There will be tips on cultivar choice and cultivation through the year, along with ideas on how to create delicious meals using your fresh produce. Plus Aaron will serve you a home-cooked lunch. You'll also have the opportunity to tour the gardens and buy plants from the nursery at a 10 per cent discount. *The Great Dixter Cookbook* will be available to buy.

Tickets cost £85
To book call **0871 230 7156**†
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Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Places are limited so booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries when booking. †Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost 13p per minute plus network extras. Calls from mobiles and other providers may vary. Overseas readers should call +44 115 896 0368.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Booking details

Date Monday 5 June 2017

Held at Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH

Programme

10am Arrival and coffee

10.30am Talk with Aaron Bertelsen on the kitchen garden and growing for seasonal recipes

12.30pm Lunch in the Great Hall featuring recipes from the book

2pm Guided tour of Great Dixter gardens

3pm Tea in the Plant Nursery with 10% discount on plants

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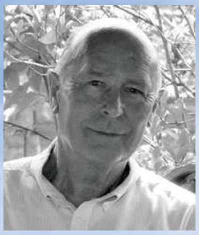

TOUR LEADER
David Wheeler is editor of the gardening journal *Hortus*. In 2009 he was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal from the RHS. David will be joined by landscape architect **Greg Kobett**.

We begin our tour in the oasis of the **King's Garden** in Copenhagen, next to the plant-rich landscape and curvaceous glasshouses of the **Botanical Garden.** We then stroll through the **baroque park at the royal palace,** with its Prince Consort kitchen garden and Queen of Denmark orangery. Next is **Exillion,** Peter Wibroe's Copenhagen house, with its formal garden and Moorish hideaways. **ØsterGro's** roof-top community garden is a calming refuge after a visit to **Tivoli,** where a series of unlikely gardens have been created in the world's oldest amusement park. A trip to the romantic **Petersgaard Manor** includes dinner in the 1870s conservatory. Finally, we visit Hans Sattrup and Keld Nielsen's farmland garden on the **island of Møn,** Marianne Follings' perennial garden, Gudmund Brandt's medicinal garden, and a chilli and herb nursery for a farewell lunch.

Booking details

Price £2,998 per person, based on two people sharing (a single supplement of £300 will be levied by the hotels). The price includes: two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Copenhagen Admiral Hotel**, a stylish waterfront hotel where all rooms will have a harbour view, and two nights' bed and breakfast at the 4-star **Hotel Frederiksminde**, a luxury hotel in a stately 1890 manor house just a step from the beach; four evening meals with wine; three lunches; and return flights from London Heathrow.

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The Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen.

JONATHAN BARSOOK

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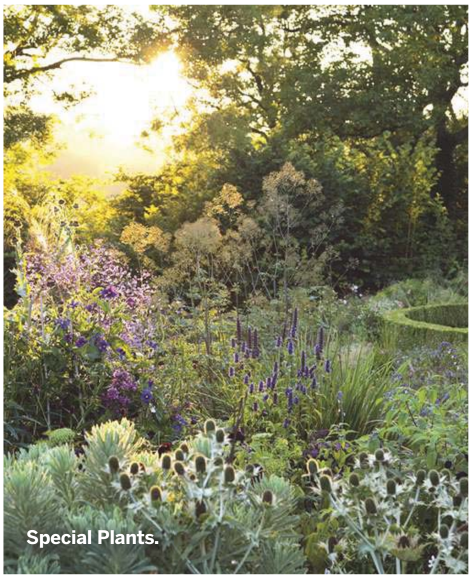
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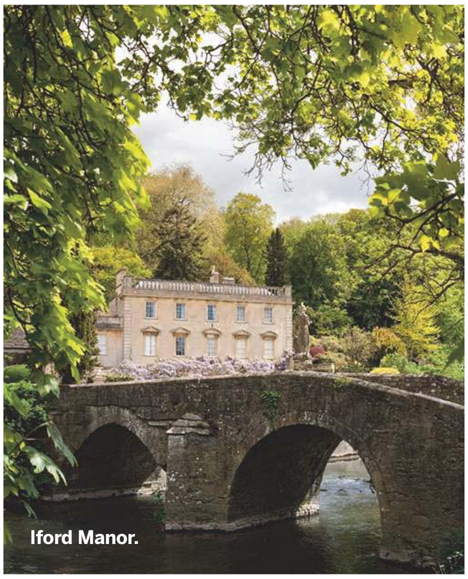
Iford Manor.

Bowood House.

The Courts Garden.

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The southern English county of Wiltshire contains many World Heritage Sites including Stonehenge, Avebury and Salisbury Cathedral. Almost half the county is designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty, so it is not surprising to find a collection of outstanding gardens.

Our trip includes visits to **The Courts**, a country garden of perfect harmony with lots of late-summer interest. There's also the iconic Italianate garden at **Iford Manor**, designed by Harold Peto. Nestled on the hillside overlooking the River Frome, this is an exceptional garden and one that invites lingering. At **Bowood House** we have an invitation to view Lord and Lady Lansdowne's private walled garden with its formal borders and productive kitchen garden. There's also **Cantax House**, **Ridleys Cheer** and an inspiring visit to renowned plantswoman Derry Watkins' garden and nursery **Special Plants**.

Particular highlights, though, come when we are joined by Tania Compton, garden designer and author of the recently published *The Private Gardens of England*. Together we visit two gardens designed by Tania: **Fonthill House**, the home of Lord and Lady Margadale, and **Spilsbury Farm** where Tania lives with her husband the botanist Dr James Compton. Then it's on to **Moor Hatches**, a contemporary family garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith. Such access is a rare treat.

We are accommodated for three nights at **The Manor House** hotel, set in the heart of Castle Combe – frequently referred to as the prettiest village in England – this is a stylish, comfortable hotel offering fine food and a peaceful ambience.

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TOUR LEADERS

Tania Compton's garden design career began at The English Gardening School. She is a trustee of the Garden Museum and a writer. Her latest book is *The Private Gardens of England*.

Dr Sophie Piebenga trained as a gardener at the National Trust and Kew. She then followed an interest in the conservation of historic landscapes and gardens, which included studying for a doctorate.

Booking details

Price £1,998 per person, based on two people sharing (a single supplement of £220 will be levied by the hotel). The price includes: three nights bed and breakfast at The Manor House, Castle Combe; two evening meals with wines at the hotel and one at an excellent local inn; plus four lunches and transport from Chippenham Railway Station. The price does not include extras at the hotel, or travel insurance.

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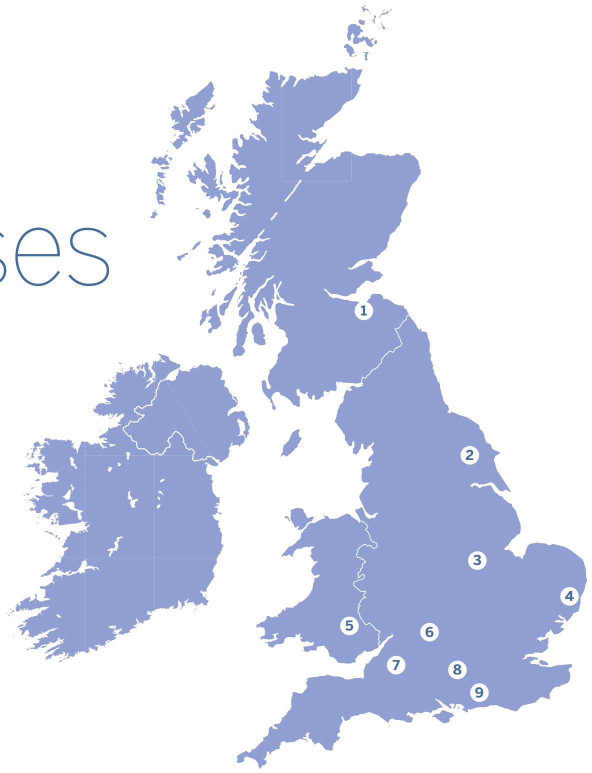

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ANNIE GUILFOYLE AND NOËL KINGSBURY, MASTERCLASS ORGANISERS

2017 workshop dates and venues (see map for venue locations)

• THURSDAY 6 APRIL (10am-4.30pm) £90
The Coach House Garden, Gloucestershire (6).
Pruning – a beginner's guide, with Mary Payne.

• WEDNESDAY 3 MAY (10am-4.30pm) £90
Yeo Valley Organic Garden, Somerset (7).
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance, with Noël Kingsbury.

• TUESDAY 9 MAY (10am-4.30pm) £110
Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire (3).
On the Edge of Wild – creating a natural garden without compromising beauty, with Matthew Wilson and Ursula Cholmeley.

• TUESDAY 13 JUNE (10am-4.30pm) £130
Darsham Nurseries, Suffolk (4).
Successful Planting – a day with Xa Tollemache and Christine Walkden.

• WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE (10am-4.30pm) £90
Walled Garden Treberfydd, Powys (5).
Selecting and Composing with Plants – Noël Kingsbury and Sarah Price.

• WEDNESDAY 26 JULY (10am-4.30pm) £130
Yeo Valley Organic Garden, Somerset (7).
Garden Through the Lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram and advice from former *Gardens Illustrated* editor Juliet Roberts on how to get your garden featured in the press.

• TUESDAY 1 AUGUST (10am-4.30pm) £110
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (9).
Extending Late Summer and Autumn Interest in the Garden – with Marina Christopher and Tom Brown.

• TUESDAY 15 AUGUST (10am-4.30pm) £110
Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire (3).
Getting to Grips with Perennials – what to use where and when, with Rosy Hardy and Ursula Cholmeley.

• WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER (10am-4.30pm) £90
The Restoration Yard, Dalkeith, Edinburgh (1).
Scottish Gardens Looking Forward – with James Alexander-Sinclair, Gavin McNaughton and Colin McBeath.

• MONDAY 9 OCTOBER (10am-4.30pm) £120
Bury Court, Hampshire (8).
In the Mind's Eye – a workshop to enrich your analytical understanding of garden design, with Sarah Eberle.

• WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER (10am-4.30pm) £110
Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire (3).
What Makes a Successful Garden? – discover the secrets of garden design from basic design principles to choosing and using hard-landscaping materials with Annie Guilfoyle and Ursula Cholmeley.

• THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER (10am-4.30pm) £90
Scampston Walled Garden, North Yorkshire (2).
The Immersive Experience – dynamic planting design at the human scale with Nigel Dunnett.

• WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER (10am-4.30pm) £120
Bury Court, Hampshire (8).
Using Grasses and Perennials in the Modern Landscape – a practical and inspirational day with Neil Lucas.

For booking and details of all workshops go to
gardenmasterclass.org
or email gardenmasterclass@gmail.com

Workshops with James Alexander-Sinclair, Tom Brown, Ursula Cholmeley, Marina Christopher, Nigel Dunnett, Sarah Eberle, Annie Guilfoyle, Rosy Hardy, Jason Ingram, Noël Kingsbury, Neil Lucas, Colin McBeath, Gavin McNaughton, Mary Payne, Sarah Price, Juliet Roberts, Xa Tollemache, Christine Walkden and Matthew Wilson.

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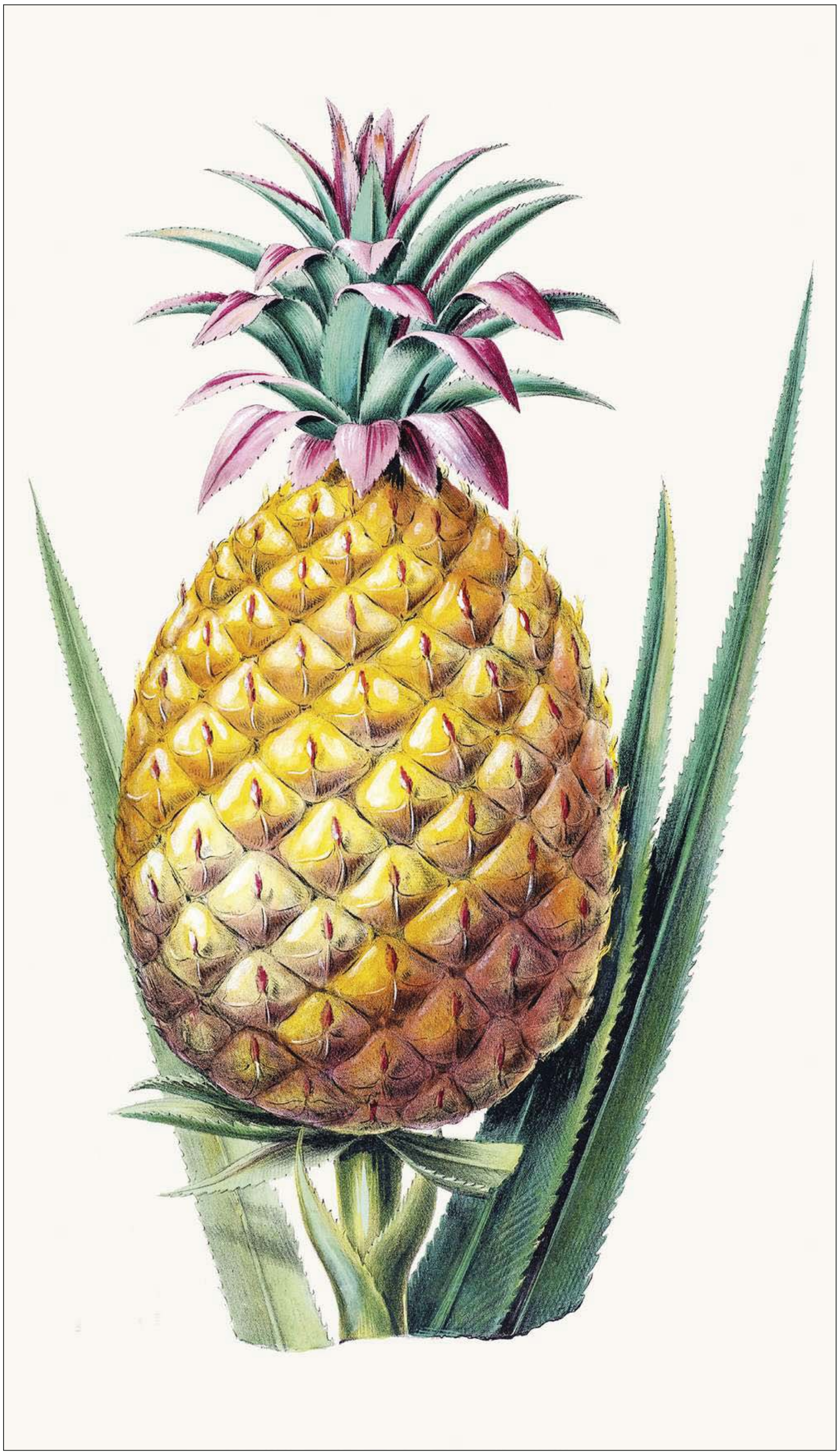
Linear collection

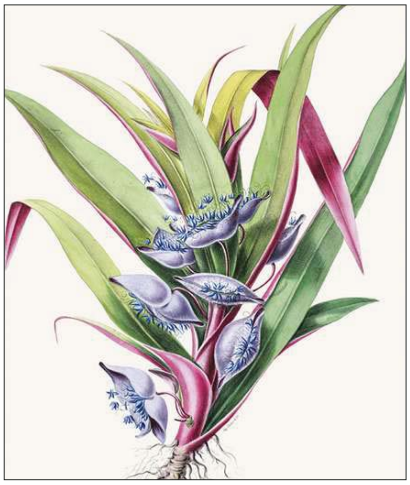
Dig in

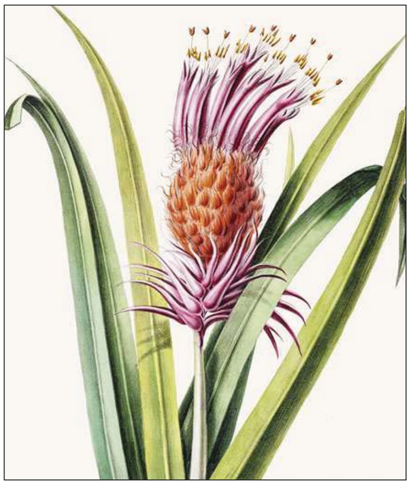
What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY **ALYS HURN**



ETIENNE DENISSE ENTITLED *FLORE D'AMÉRIQUE*, PUBLISHED 1843-46 IN PARIS. COURTESY OF THE LUESTHER T MERTZ LIBRARY, THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN.





BOTANICAL PRINTS

Exotic delights

Drawing on its collection of beautiful, vintage botanical illustrations and engravings, the New York Botanical Garden (NYGB) has teamed up with US retailer Frontgate to curate a collection of luxury framed prints, carefully chosen from the rare book and folio collection at the Botanical Garden's LuEsther T Mertz Library. The prints can be shipped to the UK, and range in price from £253.77 for a single print to £3,054.57 for a set of nine. A percentage of each sale goes towards supporting the NYBG's work in plant research, conservation, horticulture and education. **frontgate.com**

NEW PRODUCT

Stand up, look sharp

Elevate your spring pots to new heights with the Como outdoor shelf unit from Cox & Cox. Perfect for small spaces or a courtyard garden, this iron structure with a black powder-coated finish is a stylish solution for garden storage or for showing off beautiful container displays. Standing 1.53m tall, it costs £225. **coxandcox.co.uk**

TAKE NOTE

This notecard and envelope set from Thames & Hudson contains 16 notecards illustrated by Caz Hildebrand from her book Herbarium. *Each card has an individual design and the set is packaged in a beautiful box. £10.96.* ***thamesandhudson.com***

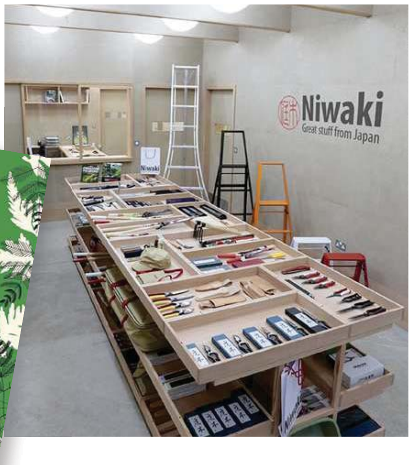
HERBARIUM
16 NOTECARDS

GARDEN THEATRE

Midsummer madness

If any play was crying out to be enjoyed in a garden setting it's Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So don't miss the chance to catch HandleBards' energetic interpretation on 22 July in the glorious setting of designer Arne Maynard's private garden, Allt-y-bela in Monmouthshire. HandleBards, who describe themselves as 'charmingly chaotic', are an innovative quartet of actors who carry all their sets and props to performances on bicycles. Tickets are £22 from **arnemaynard.com/courses**

ALLT-Y-BELA THEATRE GARDEN / BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER; *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* / THE HANDLEBARDS



SHOWROOM

Open to browse

At one time the showroom of Japanese tool experts Niwaki was open by appointment only, but now you can browse the entire range of Niwaki tools, kitchen knives and tripod ladders from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. You'll also be able to enjoy occasional exclusive discounts and tool-sharpening demonstrations from the Niwaki team. 8 Chaldicott Barns, Semley, Wiltshire SP7 9AW. Tel 01747 445059, **niwaki.com**

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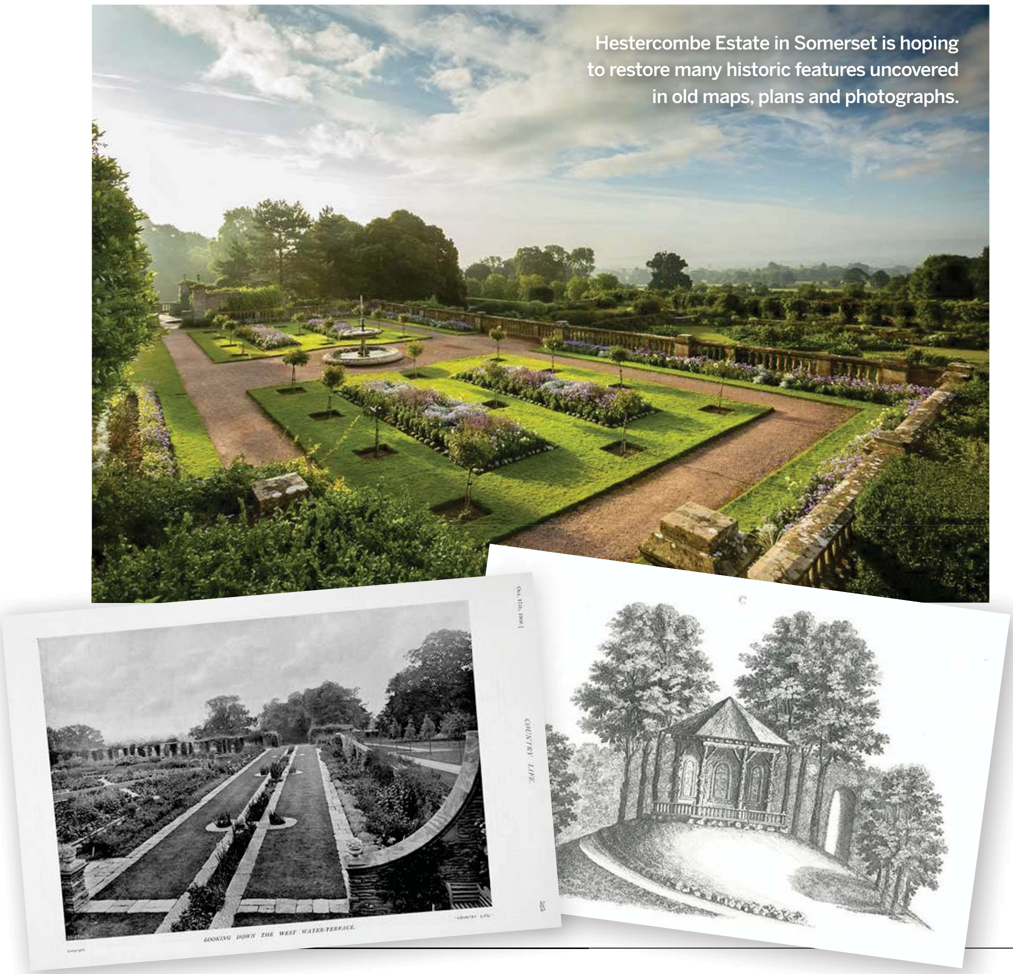

Hestercombe Estate in Somerset is hoping to restore many historic features uncovered in old maps, plans and photographs.

GARDENS APPEAL

Making history

Hestercombe Gardens Trust is launching an appeal to raise £1.5 million to restore and develop the historic gardens at Hestercombe Estate in Somerset. The Hestercombe Gardens Appeal, which launches on 21 April, aims to recreate many of the garden's original features, including an exceptionally rare Elizabethan Water Garden and an avenue of lime trees. The lime avenue, which has been traced from old maps, plans and photographs, once ran along the west side of the Formal Garden, which was designed by Gertrude Jekyll and architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. To donate, text HEST20, plus the amount you would like to give, to 70070, or call 01823 413923 or visit **hestercombe.com/appeal**

COMPANION PLANT PACK

Perfect partners

Companion planting is an organic method of pest control, which uses strongly scented or coloured plants, such as French marigolds, to deter pests or attract other insects that help keep pest populations down. To make sure your companion planting gets off to a good start the instant-garden company Rocket Gardens has launched its Companion Plant Packs containing ten plants each of tagetes, French marigolds and nasturtiums. Each pack costs £9.99. **rocketgardens.co.uk**

THE MAGIC NUMBER

What could be better than a Swiss chocolate egg to brighten your Easter? Three of course. Bettys' trio of spring-flower eggs has something for everyone with one milk, one white and one dark chocolate egg – all decorated with hand-piped flowers. £27.50. ***bettys.co.uk***

Bettys
EASTER EGGS
EASTER EGGS
Made at Bettys Craft Bakery

NATIONAL GARDENING WEEK

Fantastic four

This year's National Gardening Week runs from 10 to 16 April, and to celebrate the Royal Horticultural Society is hosting a range of activities at each of its four flagship gardens – Wisley, Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall and Rosemoor – to encourage novice gardeners to gain new skills. There's plenty for gardeners of all levels to enjoy but don't miss the chance to learn how to grow a money plant from a single leaf on 9 April or to get advice for treating poorly plants at the 'house plant hospitals' popping up at each garden on 13 April. For more information and details of all events, visit **nationalgardeningweek.org.uk**

GREAT PLAT / CHRIS LACEY PHOTOGRAPHY; HESTERCOMBE HOUSE / CHRIS LACEY PHOTOGRAPHY; COMPANION PLANTING IMAGE: PAUL WESTON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

LONGWOOD
GARDENS

Main Fountain Garden in 2017

Main Fountain Garden in 1939

A DAZZLING DISPLAY

Visiting the USA this summer? Make sure to stop by Longwood Gardens, Philadelphia's spectacular display and fountain garden – ready to welcome visitors to its Main Fountain Garden once again following a lengthy restoration

If you're planning on holidaying in the USA this summer, Longwood Gardens is certainly worth a visit. One of the world's greatest display gardens, and home to the most significant fountain collection in North America, it will be celebrating a big moment this summer. Its Main Fountain Garden will re-open on 27 May 2017, after a significant restoration project. To mark this momentous occasion, Longwood Gardens will launch its Summer of Spectacle, a huge programme of tours and events running from May right through to the end of September. The garden will once again dazzle visitors with its grand avenues, hand-carved Italian limestone, undulating boxwood and incredible fountain displays.

Set in a stunning landscape created by philanthropist Pierre S. du Pont back in the 1920s, the fountain displays use cutting-edge 21st century technology to orchestrate 1,719 jets and streams. You can see them dance, play and soar to great heights, creating basketweaves, flames and other wondrous forms. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, opening hours are extended and the many cascades are brilliantly illuminated in an infinite combination of colours – a truly spectacular fountain extravaganza.

FIREWORKS AND FOUNTAINS

For six special evenings, visitors will be offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to tour the gardens and watch a spectacular display combining both the fountains and fireworks. **Prepare to be astounded.**

Dates in 2017: 28 May, 2 July, 22 July, 12 August, 2 September, 16 September.

FIND OUT MORE AT **LONGWOODGARDENS.ORG/SUMMER-OF-SPECTACLE**

Diary

Enjoy the redesigned garden at Sitting Spiritually showroom, Dorset.

- **Easter Trail**
Explore West Dean Gardens at a time when the vibrant displays of spring bulbs are in bloom and bring the family along to take part in a traditional Easter egg hunt around the gardens. 13-17 April, 9am-5pm. £8.75 (children £4). West Dean Gardens, near Chichester, West Sussex PO18 ORX. Tel 01243 818210, westdeangardens.org.uk

- **Daffodil Festival**
Scotland's first-ever Daffodil Festival takes place this month, featuring a national daffodil collection and woodland walk. 15-16 April, 10am-4pm. £5. Backhouse/Rofsie Arts Garden, Ladybank, Cupar, Fife KY15 7UZ. Tel 0844 414 5803, rhs.org.uk

- **Spring Festival of Plants**
Discover Europe's finest nurseries in the historic grounds of Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard. 21-23 April, 10am-6pm. €14. Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard, Rue du Château, 91940 Saint-Jean de Beauregard. Tel +33 (0)1 60 12 00 01, domsaintjeanbeauregard.com

- **Topiary Workshop**
Find out how to add some creative flair to your trees and shrubs at this new topiary workshop. 22 April, 9.30am-12pm. £30. Godinton House and Gardens, Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BP. Tel 01233 643854, godintonhouse.co.uk

- **Toby's Garden Festival**
Enjoy a weekend of celebrity speakers, expert talks, plant nurseries and artisan produce. 28-29 April, 10am-5pm. £10 a day in advance. Powderham Castle, Kenton, Exeter, Devon EX6 8JQ. Tel 07561 261615, tobygardenfest.co.uk

- **Auricula Show**
The National Auricula and Primula Society hosts its annual spring Auricula Show this month. Exhibitor places still available. 29 April, 2pm-4pm. Arden School, Knowle, West Midlands B93 0PT. Tel 01530 810522, auriculaandprimula.org.uk

- **Sitting Spiritually Open Garden Weekend**
To celebrate its redesign, by RHS Tatton Gold medal winning duo Jarmanmurphy, the Sitting Spiritually showroom garden opens to visitors on 29-30 April, 10am-5pm. Sitting Spiritually, Bramble Hayes, Yawl Hill Lane, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3RP. Tel 01297 443084, sittingspiritually.co.uk

SITTING SPIRITUALLY GARDEN / MAISIE HILL, KEN GARDENER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Ridolfia segetum looked fabulous in Andy Sturgeon's garden at last year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

SEEDS TO SOW NOW

A cut above the rest

Looking for something stylish to brighten summer borders? *Ridolfia segetum*, or false fennel, was a key plant in Andy Sturgeon's Best in Show garden at last year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The beautiful plants grow to a height of 1m, making them great for the back of a border, and its acid-green flowers, produced from May to October, look fabulous in cut-flower displays. Prefers a sunny, sheltered spot with fertile soil. 500 seeds for £1.99. **mr-fothergills.co.uk**

NEW TOOL RANGE

Well handled

Darlac tools has introduced an extensive range of new tools made with vintage-looking stainless steel heads and eco-friendly bamboo handles. The range includes small tools for pots and borders, plus a unique selection of long- and mid-handled hoes. Prices start at £9.99 for a small hand tool. **darlac.com**

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Kirker Holidays provide a range of carefully crafted escorted holidays, with fascinating itineraries designed for those with an interest in gardens, history, art, archaeology, architecture and music. Groups typically consist of 12-22 like-minded travellers, in the company of an expert Tour Lecturer.

We also arrange tailor-made short break holidays to classic cities and relaxing countryside destinations throughout Europe and beyond. The Kirker Concierge is on hand to help arrange garden visits with an expert local guide as well as to book opera, concert or gallery tickets and reserve a table at a recommended restaurant.

THE PALACES & GALLERIES OF ST. PETERSBURG

SIX NIGHT HOLIDAYS | 14 APRIL, 8 SEPTEMBER & 6 OCTOBER 2017

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Our tour begins with an introductory panoramic tour of the city, where we see the Peter & Paul Fortress and Cathedral. One day is devoted to the Hermitage, the great Winter Palace which houses one of the world's greatest collections of paintings and decorative fine arts. We shall visit a number of summer palaces including Pavlovsk, the Catherine Palace and Peterhof. We also visit the Russian Museum with its unmatched collection of icons. This tour is based at the 4★ superior Angleterre Hotel.

Price from £2,098 per person for six nights including flights, accommodation with breakfast, one lunch, four dinners, Russian visa service, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.

GARDENS, TEMPLES & CITIES OF JAPAN

TWELVE NIGHT HOLIDAYS | 7 MAY & 22 OCTOBER 2017

The cultural life of Japan remains a mystery to many visitors from the west, but during our tour we shall discover its secrets as we visit not just the great cities but the countryside too.

We shall start our holiday in Tokyo, where we will explore the Ginza district and several historic palaces, shrines and temples. There will also be a day trip via Mt Fuji to Hakone and the beautiful Lake Ashi. We will visit the memorials at Hiroshima, before spending four nights in Japan's ancient capital, Kyoto. From here we shall see some of the most iconic Japanese temples, shrines and immaculate Zen gardens – highlights include the 'shrine-island' of Miyajima, Nijo Castle and the magnificent Toda-ji Temple at Nara. The final part of the holiday, based in Takayama, takes in some of the most picturesque rural areas of Japan including mountain villages, local markets and traditional artisans' workshops.

Price from £5,625 per person for twelve nights including flights, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, one lunch, four dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.

THE KIRKER ISCHIA MUSIC FESTIVAL

A SEVEN NIGHT HOLIDAY | 9 OCTOBER 2017

Join the Piatti Quartet, tenor Luis Gomes, pianist Carole Presland and violist Simon Rowland-Jones on the idyllic island of Ischia for six exclusive concerts at La Mortella, the former home of Sir William & Lady Walton. We will also enjoy one concert given as part of the Walton Trust's series.

Our concerts are held in the lovely concert hall overlooking the garden, next to the villa where the Waltons lived. We stay at the 4★ Albergo San Montano in the small resort of Lacco Ameno, a few minutes' drive from La Mortella with spectacular views of the Bay of Naples. We include a guided tour of the garden at La Mortella and a half-day sightseeing tour of Ischia. There will also be optional excursions to Naples, Herculaneum and the Villa Oplontis.

Price from £2,256 per person for seven nights including flights, accommodation with breakfast and dinner, seven concerts, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.

JOHN RUSKIN IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY | 8 MAY 2017

In the company of Dr Nicholas Shrimpton, one of the world's leading authorities on John Ruskin, our tour follows in the footsteps of the writer and art critic who came to live in Brantwood in 1871.

Our tour will include visits to Brantwood, the Ruskin Museum, Dove Cottage, the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere and Rydal Mount, where Wordsworth lived from 1813 until his death in 1850. Also included is a boat ride on the historic SY Gondola, a visit to Abbot Hall Art Gallery and a visit to the Ruskin Library and Research Centre in Lancaster. We stay in the much-loved and historic Miller Howe Hotel, with views over Lake Windermere.

Price from £1,048 for four nights including accommodation with breakfast, four dinners, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer, Dr Nicholas Shrimpton.

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Chicken and Carnation Apron, £24, 020 7831 2878, thornbackandpeel.co.uk

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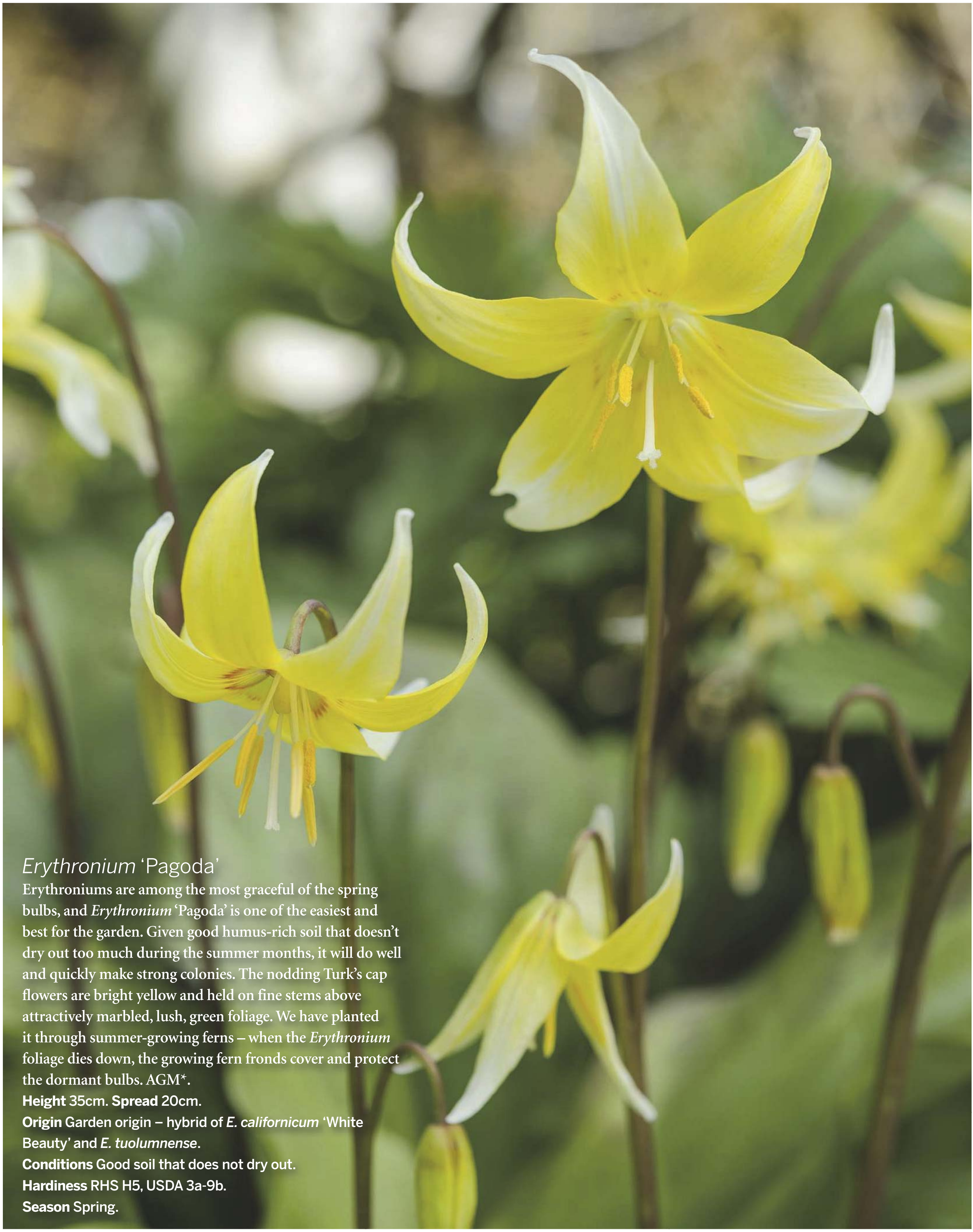


Erythronium 'Pagoda'

Erythroniums are among the most graceful of the spring bulbs, and *Erythronium* 'Pagoda' is one of the easiest and best for the garden. Given good humus-rich soil that doesn't dry out too much during the summer months, it will do well and quickly make strong colonies. The nodding Turk's cap flowers are bright yellow and held on fine stems above attractively marbled, lush, green foliage. We have planted it through summer-growing ferns – when the *Erythronium* foliage dies down, the growing fern fronds cover and protect the dormant bulbs. AGM*.

Height 35cm. **Spread** 20cm.
Origin Garden origin – hybrid of *E. californicum* 'White Beauty' and *E. tuolumnense*.
Conditions Good soil that does not dry out.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.
Season Spring.

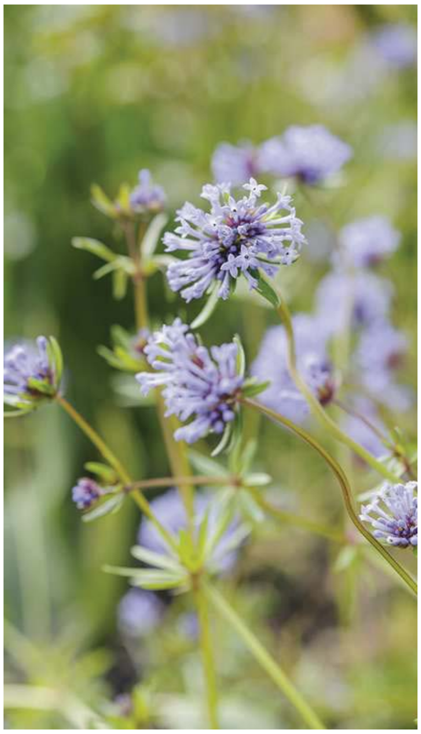
ANDREW MONTGOMERY

April plants

As days become warmer and longer, Mat's borders begin to sing with colour – from two-tone tulips and coral-pink shoots to delicate blossom

WORDS MAT REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Mat Reese
is head gardener at
Malverleys, a private
garden in Hampshire.



Asperula orientalis

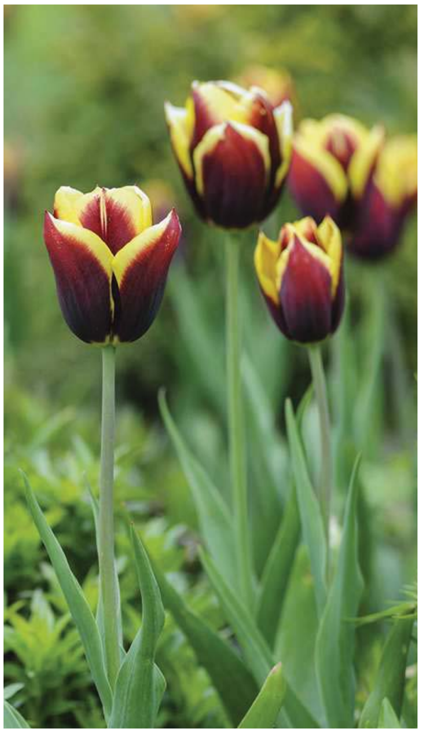
A versatile and easy annual for the flower garden. The wiry plants make mounds of spring-green foliage peppered with clusters of small, scented, blue flowers. Seed can be sown in the autumn and grown for the spring or sown in the spring for flowering later in the year. It has a very gentle habit and it won't compete with developing perennials, which can be a problem with forget-me-nots. I thread plants through bare gaps between perennials in early spring, and couple them with tulips. Doesn't like heavy, wet soils, but is otherwise quite amiable.

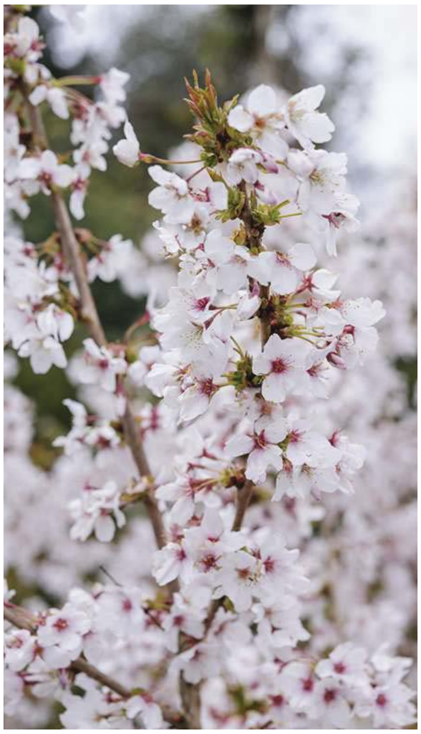
Height 35cm. **Spread** 40cm.
Origin Europe into Asia.
Conditions Any good soil that isn't saturated.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b.
Season Spring into summer.

Tulipa ‘Gavota’

The flowers of *Tulipa* ‘Gavota’ have a lovely shape – square at the base and slightly flared at the mouth with pointed tips. The distinctly medieval colour combination of burgundy with golden yellow margins is quite striking, although difficult to blend with other tulips or flowers. I use it against a solid foil of fresh, green foliage, such as lupins or sweet williams, which will go on to engulf the old flower stems after the tulips have finished and continue the show. ‘Gavota’ can be perennial if it likes your soil, but we replant each year to ensure a good display. AGM.

Height 45cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any good soil.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.
Season Spring.





Prunus nipponica var. *kurilensis* ‘Brillant’

In spring the upright branches of this pretty Kurile cherry are drenched in delicate pink blossoms that are particularly good when married with tulips. If left to its own devices, it will form a small, shrubby tree that will reach approximately 5m. However, I coppice it back hard biennially to 20cm after flowering. The strong shoots produced during the summer will colour up nicely in autumn and can be partnered with nerines. Plant in good soil and, if you choose to coppice, feed with good garden compost in spring to keep it going.

Height 5m. **Spread** 4m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Good soil.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Spring and autumn.

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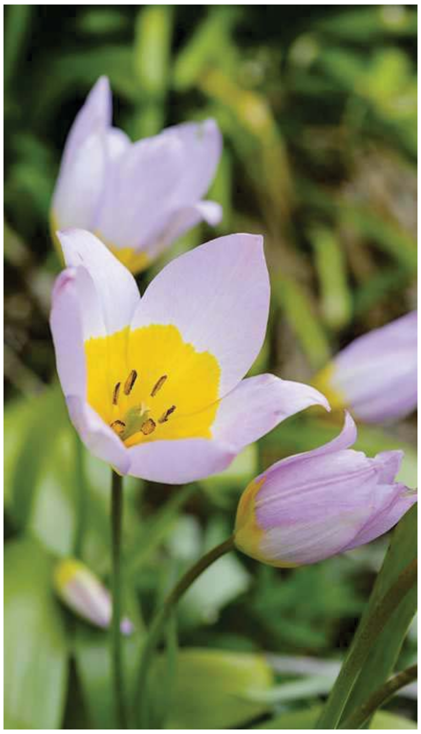
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Tulipa saxatilis (Bakeri Group) 'Lilac Wonder'

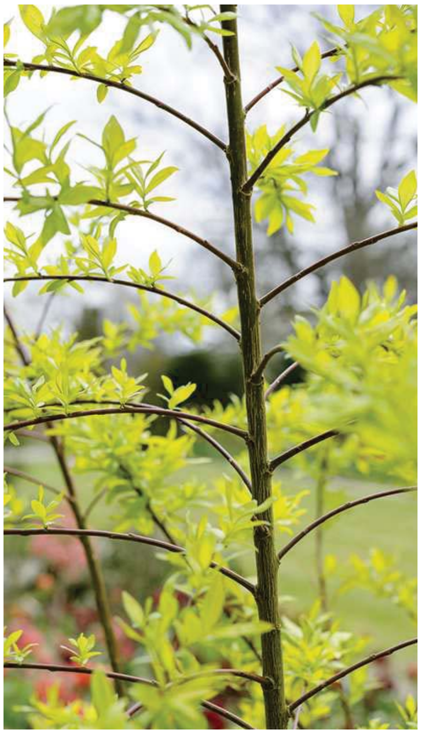
Atop a carpet of glossy, sickle-shaped leaves, pale lavender-pink flowers (up to four per stem) open in the warm sunshine to reveal a large, yellow splodge in the centre. Given the right conditions – a stony, free-draining soil that bakes during the summer months – this is a fine perennial tulip. Plant in the autumn at a depth of three times the size of the bulb, 15cm apart. I grow them through a carpet of thyme where the bulbs are protected from delving trowels during the summer. As the foliage senesces and yellows, I pluck the withered stems away.

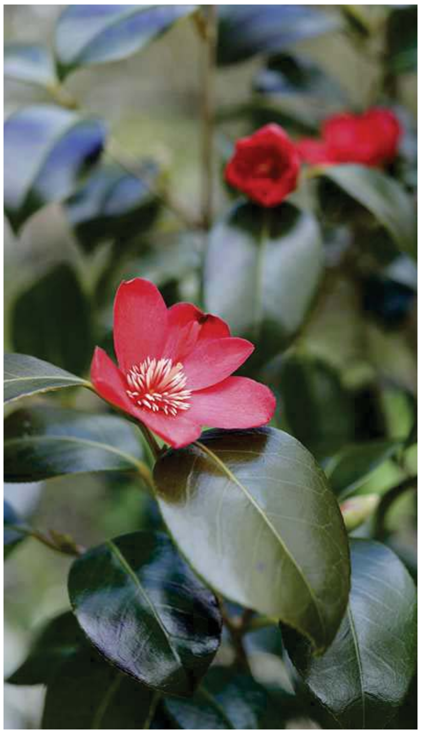
Height 30cm. **Spread** 25cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Free-draining soil; sunny site.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Spring.

Salix udensis 'Golden Sunshine'

Willows are wonderful plants for a mixed border as they can take being cut back hard each year, which keeps foliage fresh and allows you to restrict the plants to a height that associates well with herbaceous flowers. This golden cultivar has lovely foliage that doesn't scorch and is a good, lively counterpoint in the green garden tapestry. We have three plants, one near the front of the border, which is pollarded to woody knuckles at 1.2m; the two behind to 1.9m. New growth will reach 1.5m in a season.

Height 5m. **Spread** 4m.
Origin Discovered in Japan.
Conditions Any soil that doesn't get too dry.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.
Season Spring to autumn.





Camellia japonica 'Kimberley'

Covered from head to toe in a suit of lustrous evergreen leaves, this is as useful when it's not in flower as when it is. In flower, the combination of dark-green leaves and brilliant-red flowers, each with a gold boss, is incredibly smart. The slightly cup-shaped flowers drop off when they have finished, so they won't spoil the show. 'Kimberley' makes a good, solid contrast to more ethereal plants, particularly when placed with ferns or deciduous shrubs. It is best when planted in woodland conditions in humus-rich, acidic soil, in a little shade.

Height 5m. **Spread** 4m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Likes moist, humus-rich soil but won't tolerate saturated roots; shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.
Season Spring.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Steeped in horticultural history, **Gravetye Manor** in West Sussex refuses to rest on its laurels. Over the past few years the gardens have been completely rejuvenated, and in spring it's worth visiting for the impressive collection of bulbs, many of which date back to the time of former owner William Robinson, and the new plantings of tulips. Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex H19 4LJ. Tel 01342 810567, gravetyemanor.co.uk

But, if you really want see tulips, **Pashley Manor Gardens** on the Kent/East Sussex borders boasts 30,000 of them. The perfect place to choose next year's plantings. Ticehurst, nr Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 7HE. Tel 01580 200888, pashleymanorgardens.com

The **Wisley Plant Centre** at RHS Garden Wisley has

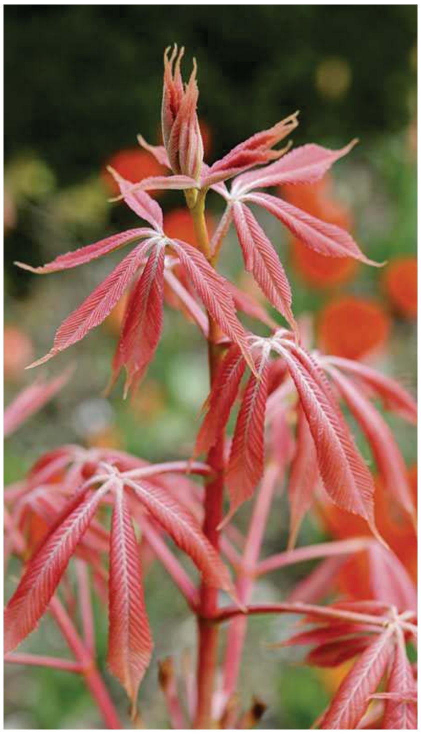
Ness Botanic Gardens.

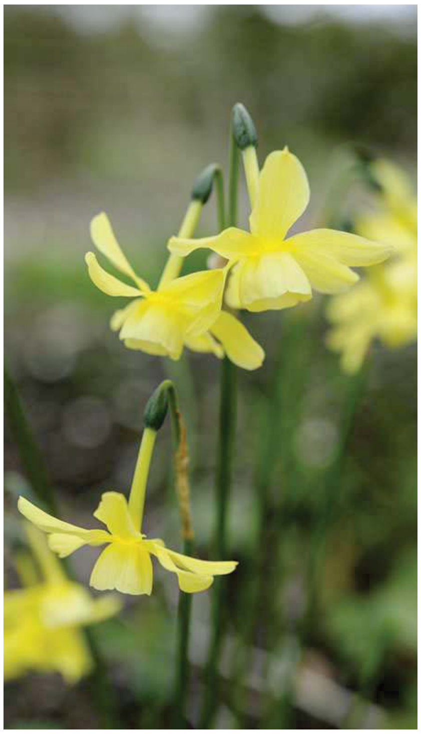
UK CITY IMAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Aesculus x *neglecta* 'Erythroblastos'

For much of the year, the sunrise horse chestnut is rather dowdy, leaving you to wonder: 'What's with the name?' But come spring, spectacular new shoots of coral pink hatch from fat, chestnut buds attached to a dull, grey, twiggy skeleton. This display causes quite a stir from all those who see it, as they scribble down its name on their must-have lists. Although slow to establish, this unusual tree needs very little attention – just a good soil. Plant it with a golden willow for fireworks. AGM.

Height 8m. **Spread** 5m.
Origin Hybrid of *A. flava* x *A. sylvatica*.
Conditions Any good soil.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
Season Spring.





Narcissus 'Hawera'

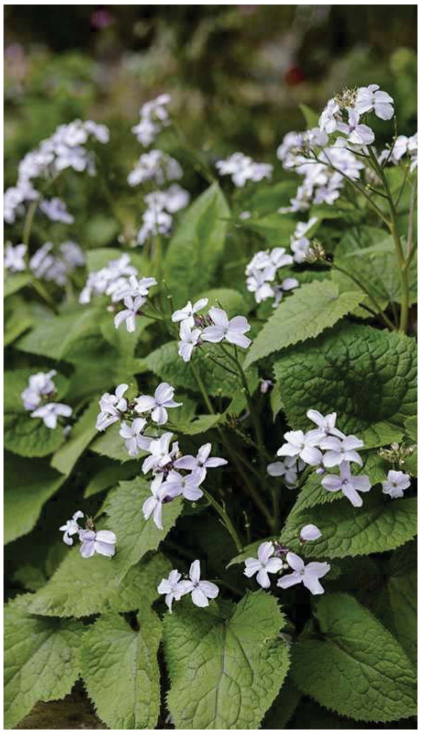
This particularly pretty, scented narcissus has nodding flowers in a shade of cool, primrose yellow, which are held above discreet, rush-like foliage. I like to thread the bulbs naturalistically through the borders by weaving clumps amid sleeping ferns and perennials. It makes a striking combination planted with pulmonarias. Grows well in most good garden soils in full or broken sun. The bulbs will increase year after year, and we find they are sometimes spread accidentally with work on the borders. I let it go where it pleases. AGM.

Height 20cm. **Spread** 18cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Fertile soil, that doesn't stay wet for long periods; sun or part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Season Late spring.

Lunaria rediviva

It's hard to imagine why this beautiful, early flowering, herbaceous perennial is not used more often. The large and luxurious foliage is an unusual, but useful, presence early in the season when so much of the gardener's pallet is small and fussy. Sweetly scented, cruciform flowers are held in loose sprays of palest mauve and make lovely posies when cut for the house. By late summer onwards it can look a bit depressed, in much the same way as peonies do, but you can deal with this by placing summer-growing perennials or shrubs in front of it. AGM.

Height 60cm. **Spread** 50cm.
Origin Europe, into western Siberia.
Conditions Most soils; will tolerate summer shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.
Season Spring.



become a destination in its own right. It holds diverse stocks of shrubs, roses, climbers, herbaceous plants, alpines and house plants – many are quite rare – and has a good selection of bedding and vegetable plants in spring. Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 0845 260 9000, rhs.org.uk

Further north, **Ness Botanic Gardens** has a large collection of rhododendrons, camellias and other shrubs dating back to the Victorian heyday of plant hunting. University of Liverpool, Neston Road, Ness, Cheshire CH64 4AY. Tel 0151 795 6300, nessgardens.org.uk

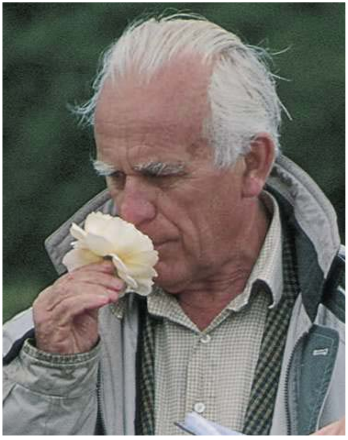
Not too far from Ness, but over the border in Wales, is **Bodnant Garden**, which is also celebrated for its wonderful plantings of rhododendrons in a magical valley setting. Tal-y-Cafn, nr Colwyn Bay, Conwy LL28 5RE. Tel 0344 800 1895, nationaltrust.org.uk

If you do venture to north Wales, **Crûg Farm Plants** is always worth a detour. It offers many tempting new introductions collected from the wild that can add an exciting edge to plantings. Griffith's Crossing, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1TU. Tel 01248 670232, crug-farm.co.uk

Bodnant Garden.

GARDENPICS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Olivia Rose Austin *(Ausmixture)*



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IN THE GARDEN

Cherry, plum, vine, ox-heart or beefsteak? Windowsill, balcony, allotment or greenhouse? Jojo considers the tomato in all its variety

WORDS JOJO TULLOH ILLUSTRATIONS SARAH YOUNG

Everything about growing tomatoes is satisfying (except blight). The flavour is incentive enough, not to mention the cheerful sight of glossy fruits. The leaves have texture as well as scent, a unique, felty aroma redolent of summer. To avoid kilos of green tomatoes, grow some early, cold-tolerant cultivars and some fail-safe favourites ('Gardener's Delight', 'Alicante' or 'Shirley') that crop heavily alongside more esoteric choices. On allotments, ask seasoned plot holders what thrives locally. Your growing space may be limited, but as long as you have light you can grow a tomato. If you have a balcony, consider growing taller (vine) fruits up a string suspended from a hook. If you have only a windowsill, opt for dwarf or bush tomatoes. Tall terracotta pots work well for this (most DIY centres sell them). Choose some cultivars to eat in salads and some for sauces. There's still time to sow seeds (mid-April is the cut-off point), but if you can't act immediately order plug plants (most large seed companies offer these). Here are some cultivars you might consider:
'Grushovka' (Early Pink), which costs £2.91 for 18 seeds from The Real Seed Company (realseeds.co.uk), is a quick-growing tomato that is especially suited to cooler climates. The egg-shaped, shocking-pink fruits are good for vivid salads or lurid gazpachos.
'Chadwick Cherry' also from The Real Seed Company is a tasty, heavy-cropping, medium-sized cherry tomato. Pretty enough for the potager or windowsill, it also has good disease resistance. £2.18 for 18 seeds.
'Tumbler' F1 Hybrid from Tuckers (tuckers-countrystores.com) is an early, compact, red cherry, ideal for a hanging basket or to cascade over the sides of a pot. It produces around 2kg of very sweet tomatoes per plant. For a colourful effect, why not grow it with 'Tumbling Tom Yellow' also from Tuckers? Both cost £2.40 for ten seeds.
'Green Zebra' from Chiltern Seeds (chilternseeds.co.uk) combines beauty and flavour with its striped chartreuse and lime-green fruit that has a tangy flavour. A similar tomato, but red-fruited with yellow stripes, is the early, heavy-cropping 'Tigerella' also from Chiltern Seeds. Both are best grown under glass and cost £1.95 a packet.
'Country Taste' F1 Hybrid from Tuckers is a beefsteak tomato with large, glossy, dark-red fruits that are sweet and delicious. It ripens earlier than other large tomatoes, and can be grown outdoors or in, but will ripen quicker under glass. It costs £2.40 for ten seeds.
'Costoluto Fiorentino' from The Real Seed Company is a ribbed beauty, delicious cooked or raw. Its tall, vigorous vines produce heavy yields over a long period. Hope for a hot summer. £2.17 for 25 seeds.

WHAT TO DO NOW – TIPS FOR TOMATO SUCCESS

Germinate in a seed tray and pot seedlings on at three-leaf stage into 9cm pots of compost. Seeds bought last year can be tested for viability by placing them on dampened kitchen towel and seeing if they sprout. Make sure they have enough space (with leaves not touching) and plenty of light. When hardening off your plants, let them adjust gradually (from windowsill to cloche to open ground). Tomatoes won't recover from the shock of a cold night, so don't plant out until mid June. When planting vine varieties into the ground, plant up to the lowest leaves and twine the tips up strings. Pinch out the side shoots and remove the tip (just above the highest flower) when four or five trusses have set. To aid ripening, as the fruits develop, remove any covering leaves to get full sun on the trusses.

IN THE KITCHEN

Spring is here so get out into the garden to harvest green garlic and rhubarb for making into soups, pickles and ketchups

If you have more rhubarb than you know what to do with, think beyond puddings. Rhubarb is a versatile ingredient that makes good pickles, cordials, ketchups and chutneys. In Japan, pickles (known collectively as *tsukemono*) are made with thinly sliced vegetables, such as radish, fennel, turnip, beetroot, cabbage and cucumber. They are quick to prepare and are eaten at the start of the meal. For a rhubarb pickle, make a brine by combining 250ml boiled water, 130ml rice wine vinegar, 4tbsp sugar and 1tbsp sea salt. Stir to dissolve the sugar and salt and then pour over three or four stalks of rhubarb, cut into slender batons. Cover and refrigerate for four days before eating (keeps for up to a month). Rhubarb makes a good cordial too, as in this recipe from Kathleen Thomas, a Devon farmer's wife who offered it as a harvest cooler, writing in her *Farmers Weekly* column in the 1960s. It works just as well for thirsty gardeners. Take 500g rhubarb cut into cubes and boil with 1.5 litres of water. After 20 minutes, strain the liquid into a bowl in which you have placed 145g sugar, and the thinly pared rind and juice of one lemon. Stir and drink when cool.

RECIPES

Rhubarb ketchup

A tangy, sour and spicy ketchup that is very good with a bacon sandwich.

- **1tbsp pickling spice**
- **½tsp each of cumin, black pepper, mustard and coriander seeds**
- **4 cloves**
- **2 small dried chillies**
- **4 cardamom pods**
- **A few shards of cinnamon bark**
- **1kg rhubarb, trimmed and chopped into chunks**
- **1kg red onions, peeled and diced**
- **1tbsp finely grated ginger**
- **800ml (approx) distilled malt vinegar**
- **200g (approx) bleached sugar**
- **Hearty pinch each of ground nutmeg, ground ginger, mace, ground cloves, salt and black pepper**

Place all the whole spices in a small piece of cloth and tie tightly with string. Place the spice bag in a preserving pan or large saucepan with the rhubarb, ginger and onions and 200ml of the vinegar and simmer until soft. Remove the spice bag and push the remaining mixture through a sieve with a wooden spoon or use a mouli. Measure the pulp and add 100g sugar and 300ml of vinegar for each 600ml of pulp. Cook the purée, sugar, vinegar, seasoning and ground spices in a pan and cook for around 40 minutes. Skim off any froth that forms and stir frequently. When the mixture has reached a thick, glossy pouring consistency, tip it into hot, sterilised bottles with clips. This will keep well in the fridge, but if you want to store the ketchup for a long time, you can sterilise it first by wrapping each filled bottle in a tea towel and lowering it into a large pan of boiling water. Boil for 10 minutes, remove and place on a wooden board or similar to cool. Finally, tighten the caps and place in the cupboard.

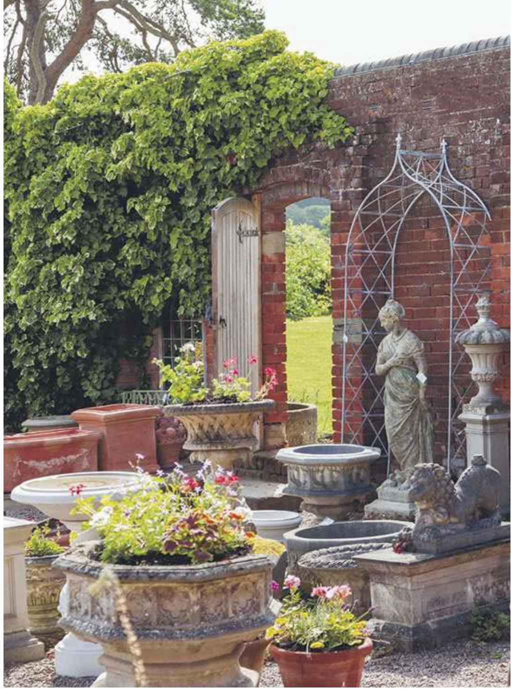
Green garlic and potato soup

This soup sings of spring and is an ideal way of using the aromatic green growth of young garlic plants. You can use a handful of ransoms (wild garlic leaves) and a small onion instead of young garlic.

SERVES 4

- **8 bulbs green garlic (home-grown plants will be about the size of spring onions)**
- **50g butter**
- **200g potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped**
- **1 tin (200g approx) haricot beans**
- **Sea salt and pepper**

Clean the garlic, removing the tough outer skin and the withered tops. You should be left looking at something that resembles a very juvenile leek, with equal parts of white and green. Chop into thin rings. Finely chop a tablespoon of the green tops and set them aside to use as a garnish for the soup. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and sweat the garlic very gently (it should soften but not colour). Add salt, cover and steam for five minutes. Add the potatoes and the beans and cook the mixture for another minute. Cover with boiling water (to the depth of about two fingers) and cook until the potatoes are soft. Remove a cupful of the mixture, purée and return to the pan (this adds body to the soup). Season. Place a lightly toasted bread crust, sprinkled with oil and salt, into the bottom of each soup bowl. Pour in the soup and serve. □



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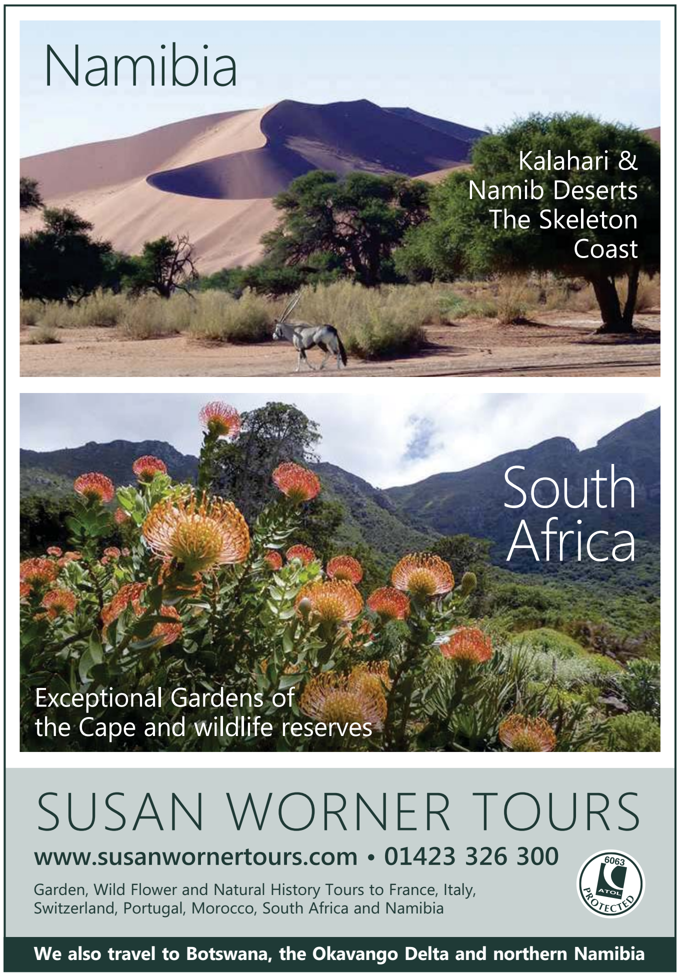

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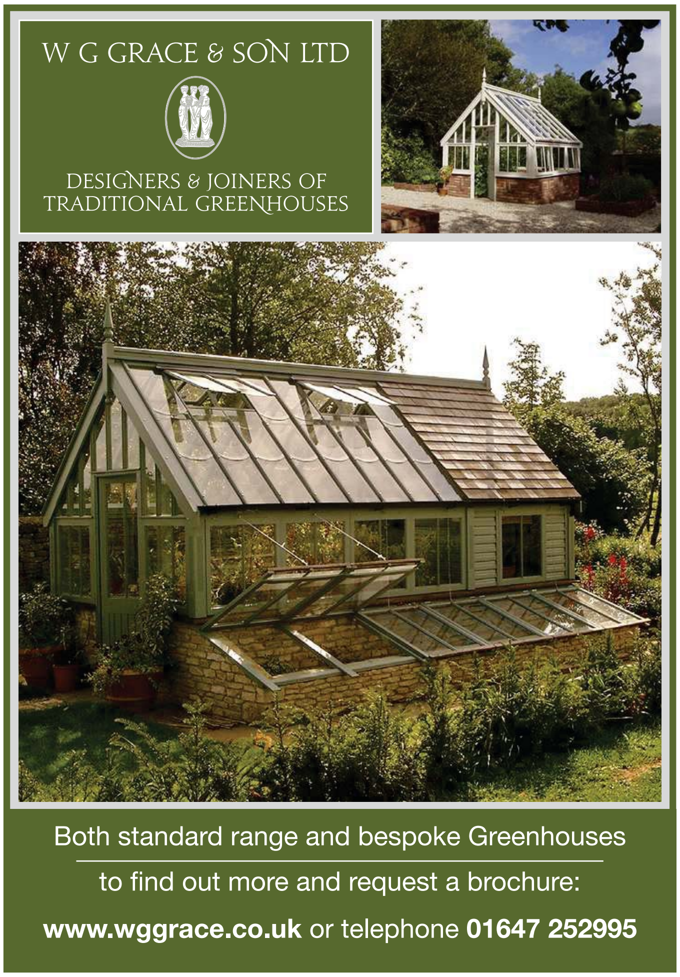

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Natalie Chivers

She's passionate about planting and a champion for thriftiness but Natalie, who's currently curator at Treborth Botanic Garden, laments the loss of botany courses from our universities

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory Our family home in Devon: the garden was an expanse of knee-high grass with two gnarly apple trees, a mass of scrubby forsythias and a row of oaks that towered over the end of the garden shed. My sisters and I would bound through the grass with our dog, collecting acorns and making nests for slow worms.

Who has inspired your career the most? My grandma Olive is a dedicated gardener. When I used to visit her in Birmingham, where she lived for 44 years, it was her thriftiness that fascinated me the most. She saved every bulb, every seed and we would see it again the next year in a different bed, pot or hanging basket.

Horticultural heroes I first met Adam Frost when I was training with the Royal Horticultural Society and working at the Chelsea Flower Show. Adam welcomed me into his team, watched me graduate from the RHS and employed me a year later to build another garden at Chelsea. Adam's grass-roots attitude to gardening is very refreshing and experiencing his determination and passion for plants is addictive.

Favourite garden Holehird Garden in Cumbria. This hillside garden overlooks Windermere and is managed by the Lakeland Horticultural Society, a volunteer group that has created a stunning variety of garden experiences.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today The loss of botany in the UK. There are no botany degrees offered in UK universities now, and plant science is lacking in schools' curricula. Where is the next generation of plant taxonomists who will name our plants going to come from? Or the field botanists who will be able to identify global flora? Botany and horticulture go hand in hand.

What is the hardest gardening related thing you've ever had to do? Double digging my RHS allotment for my Certificate in Practical Horticulture. I sat in the last empty segment and cried. But it was worth the pain!

Favourite gardening books *Gardening in Pyjamas: Horticultural Enlightenment for Obsessive Dawn Raiders* by Helen Yemm and *The Kew Plant Glossary: An Illustrated Dictionary of Plant Terms* by Henk Beentje.

Contact n.j.chivers@bangor.ac.uk
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tulip festival

Pick of the bunch

Each year, from mid April until mid May, the gardens of Arundel Castle in West Sussex explode with colour as the Tulip Festival provides one of the country's most spectacular floral extravaganzas

WORDS CAMILLA SWIFT PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE

In brief
Name Arundel Castle.
What Home to the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk and venue for an annual Tulip Festival from April to May.
Where Arundel, West Sussex.
Size 40 acres of gardens and grounds.
Soil Essentially chalky, very light. Many years of good composting with lots of well-rotted horse manure.
Climate Warm, little frost. So sheltered that tender perennials, such as cannas, salvias, bananas and palms, remain in the ground throughout winter.
Hardiness rating USDA 9.

Vast terracotta pots line the Italianate terrace in the Collector Earl's Garden, containing 4,000 *Tulipa* 'Pink Impression' underplanted with forget-me-nots. In the middle of each pot a *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Maxima Lutea' cleverly mimics the agave leaves on top of the urns, expertly gilded by the Duchess of Norfolk and a friend.

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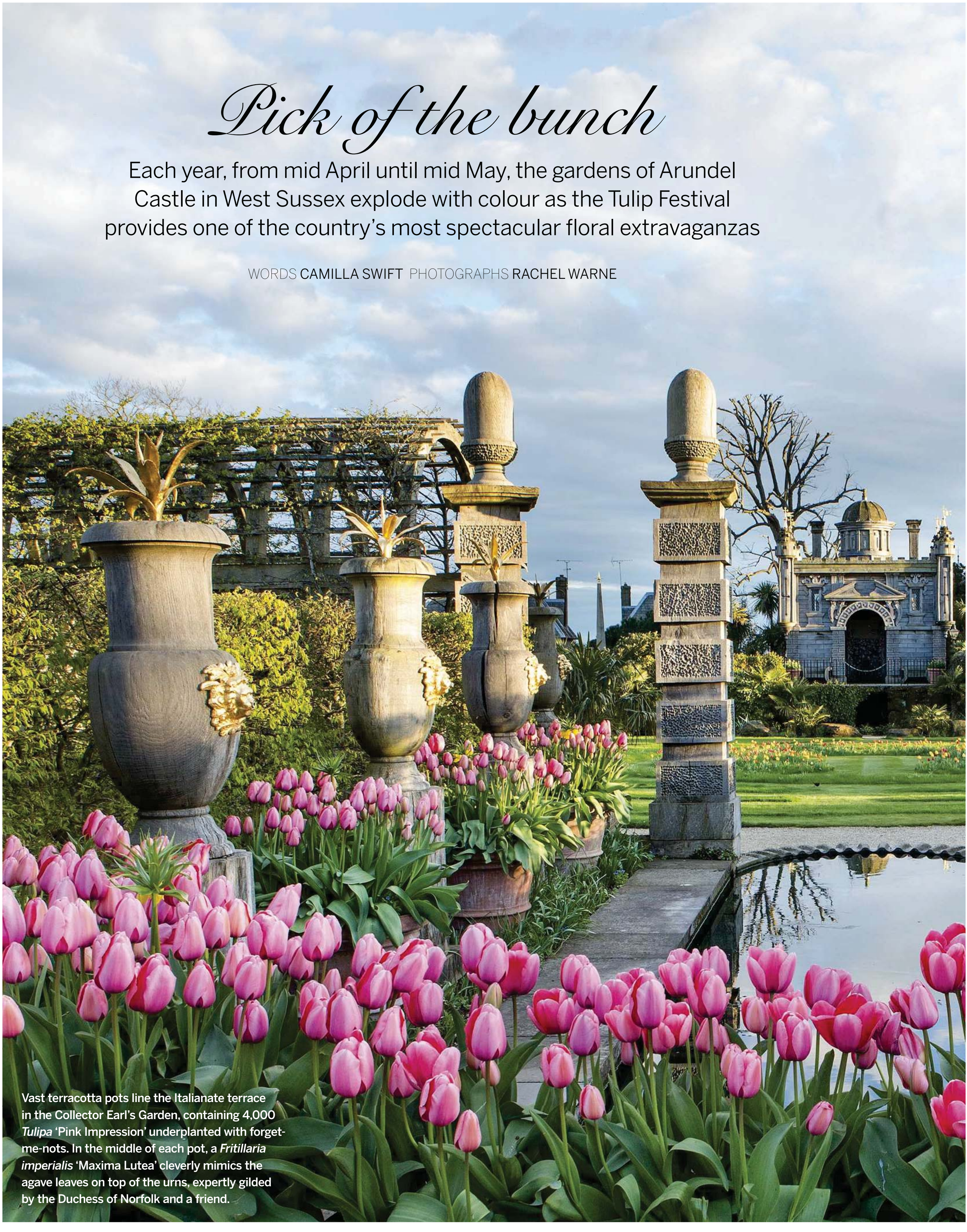

Vast terracotta pots line the Italianate terrace in the Collector Earl's Garden, containing 4,000 *Tulipa* 'Pink Impression' underplanted with forget-me-nots. In the middle of each pot, a *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Maxima Lutea' cleverly mimics the agave leaves on top of the urns, expertly gilded by the Duchess of Norfolk and a friend.

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In 16th-century Turkey, a tulip was said to be worth more than a human life. When tulip mania in the Netherlands reached its peak, just 100 years later, single bulbs sold for more than ten times the annual income of a skilled craftsman; land, houses, beds, clothes were sacrificed in exchange for one precious bulb. A sailor was thrown into a Dutch jail for mistaking a tulip bulb for an onion and eating it: the cost of such wanton gluttony equalling the cost of feeding an entire ship's crew for 12 months.

Tulips continue to inflame passions today, but thankfully without the financial implications of the past. Probably just as well, especially if you are Martin Duncan, head gardener at Arundel Castle, who is responsible for planting the 36,000 tulip bulbs for this year's Tulip Festival. From high on a hill in West Sussex, this great castle commands magnificent views of the South Downs, the River Arun, and 40 acres of garden, currently studded with tulips, thousands of brightly coloured gems sparkling in the spring sunshine. They are everywhere: carpeting the Wildflower Garden, peeking through the upturned roots of the Stumpery, sweeping over steep grass banks, marching in colourful ranks along long yew hedges. Above all, there are the pots, bold blocks of colour, jostling at the entrance to the Victorian vinery and peach house; but nowhere more magnificent than in the Collector Earl's Garden. In a contemporary take on the formal Jacobean garden, designers Julian and Isabel Bannerman have created a gloriously Italianate piece of ▷

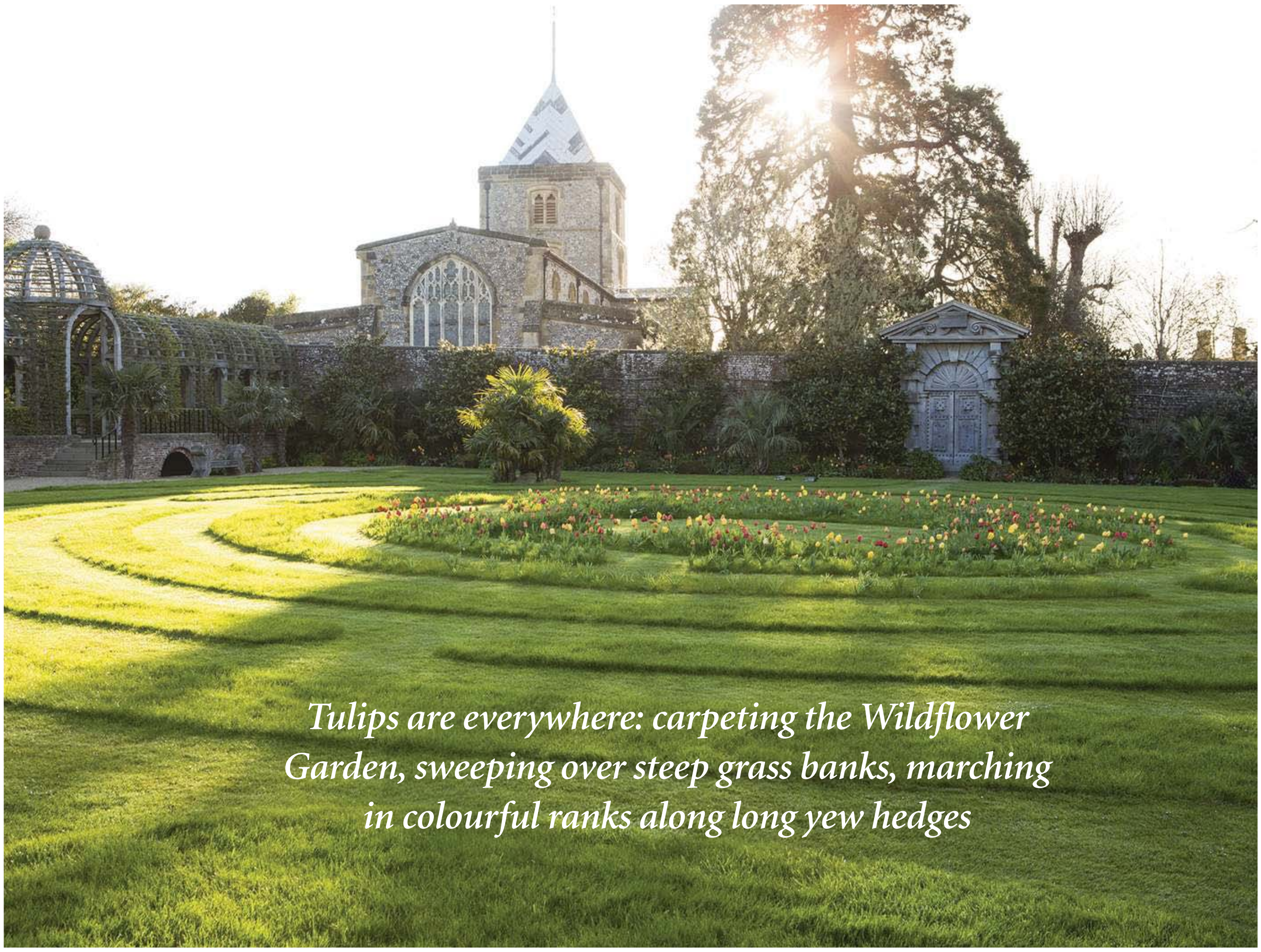
Clockwise from top left

Box parterres in the Kitchen Garden with a vibrant profusion of tulips 'Apeldoorn's Elite' and 'Beauty of Apeldoorn'. Pots of 'Purple Prince' provide contrasting full stops en route. Behind is a mix of 'White Dream', 'Annie Schilder', 'Don Quichotte' and 'Purple Dream'.

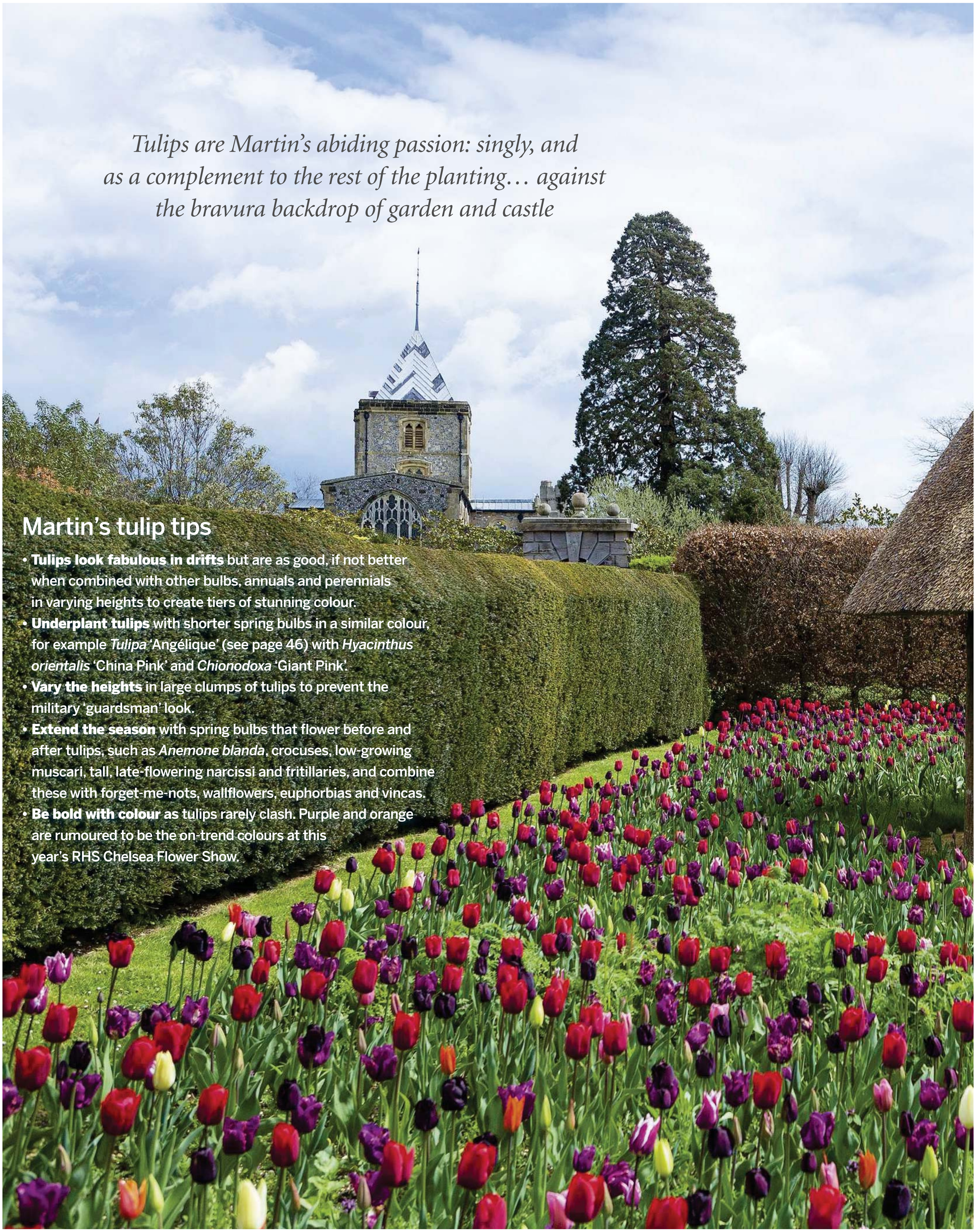
A fiery Darwin Hybrid mix picks out the curves in the grass labyrinth in the Collector Earl's Garden.

***T.* 'Apeldoorn' flourishes** on the grassy castle ramparts. Reliably perennial, this red Darwin Hybrid contrasts brilliantly with the white *Narcissus* 'Thalia'.

Drifts of tulips thread through the herbaceous borders, the colour palette shifting to reflect the moods in different areas of the garden. Here cultivars include 'Purple Dream', 'Angélique' and 'Curly Sue'.



Tulips are everywhere: carpeting the Wildflower Garden, sweeping over steep grass banks, marching in colourful ranks along long yew hedges



Tulips are Martin's abiding passion: singly, and as a complement to the rest of the planting… against the bravura backdrop of garden and castle

Martin's tulip tips

- **Tulips look fabulous in drifts** but are as good, if not better when combined with other bulbs, annuals and perennials in varying heights to create tiers of stunning colour.
- **Underplant tulips** with shorter spring bulbs in a similar colour, for example *Tulipa* 'Angélique' (see page 46) with *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'China Pink' and *Chionodoxa* 'Giant Pink'.
- **Vary the heights** in large clumps of tulips to prevent the military 'guardsman' look.
- **Extend the season** with spring bulbs that flower before and after tulips, such as *Anemone blanda*, crocuses, low-growing muscari, tall, late-flowering narcissi and fritillaries, and combine these with forget-me-nots, wallflowers, euphorbias and vincas.
- **Be bold with colour** as tulips rarely clash. Purple and orange are rumoured to be the on-trend colours at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

A sea of bright colour temporarily swamps what will soon return to being the Wildflower Garden. Tulips include 'Passionale', 'Mistress', the almost-black 'Paul Scherer' and 'Bastogne'. This year the area will boast 8,000 bulbs, with a border of forced-blue irises circling the hut.

▷ garden theatre: the tulip display here is quite simply breathtaking. No wonder a recent visitor burst into tears at the sight.

Martin has been at Arundel now for eight years and has introduced imaginative new features, such as the Stumpery and Wildflower Garden, while maintaining the classical elements of the garden. He is "very fortunate" he says, as the castle's owners, the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk have always been "enthusiastic, interested and supportive, and the driving force behind all our garden projects."

Tulips are Martin's abiding passion: singly, as a complement to the rest of the planting, and especially set against the bravura backdrop of garden and castle. His team comprises six professional gardeners, six volunteers and a posse of local Girl Guides who help out every year at bulb-planting time.

In his first year, Martin, working with the Duchess, planted 5,000 tulip bulbs. In readiness for this year's festival, he and his team will have planted a total of 52,000 spring bulbs, including 36,000 new tulips. He sources all his bulbs from wholesaler JUB Holland with which he works closely creating mixes of colour and variety.

And when it's all over? For the visitors, there is more still to come as the season continues: an allium extravaganza, poppies in July… But what of the tulips themselves? "We pride ourselves on having very little waste," says Martin. Perennial cultivars he will leave in situ, together with all those in grass. Pots he replenishes with new bulbs every year, and in the Wildflower Garden, he and his team will lift the bulbs by hand (come back Girl Guides), lay them in rows to dry like onions before replanting in grass. Any he doesn't use are sold at the ticket office, where fortunately, you no longer have to exchange all your worldly goods for a single bulb. □

Turn the page for 48 tulips to admire at Arundel

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Arundel Castle & Gardens, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9AB.

Tel 01903 882173.

Website arundelcastle.org

The castle and gardens re-open on 1 April 2017. The Tulip Festival runs from mid April to mid May. Admission from £11.

48

tulips to admire at Arundel Castle

Listed below are just some of the tulips on show at Arundel Castle this year to inspire your own display for next year. If you want to ensure a long season of colour then it's a useful idea to first sort your favourites into flowering times – otherwise the sheer choice can be overwhelming.

Early Flowering
(end March to April) Single and Double Early, Greigii and Kaufmanniana, Fosteriana and species tulips.
Mid-season Flowering
(April) Darwin Hybrid, Triumph and Parrot tulips.
Late-season Flowering
(end April to May) Single and Double Late, Viridiflora, Lily-flowered, Fringed and Rembrandt tulips.

1 *Tulipa* 'Allegretto'
Rose-like flowers, with densely packed crimson petals that have a gold trim. Needs shelter. Flowers May. 45cm.

2 *T.* 'Angélique'
Martin's absolute favourite tulip. Like a glorious, fragrant pink peony, it works beautifully with other tulips. Flowers late April to early May. 45cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b†.

3 *T.* 'Apeldoorn's Elite'
Vanilla-scented and, like all Darwin Hybrids, really effective when planted in blocks. Flowers mid April. 50-55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-11.

4 *T.* 'Auxerre'
A feathered, creamy-white tulip edged with pink. It becomes predominantly pink with age. Flowers April to May. 55cm.

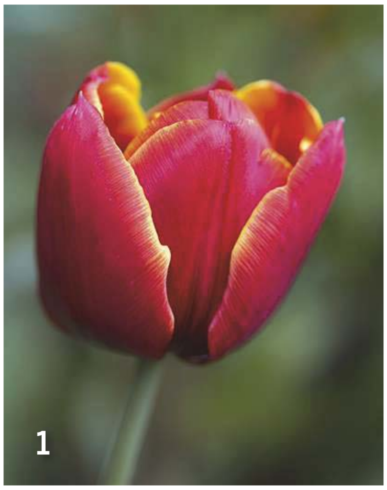
5 *T.* 'Ballerina'
Smells of mandarin oranges. Looks wonderful woven through bright, spring euphorbia. Flowers late April to early May. 55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *T.* 'Barbados'
A truly bizarre red tulip with the most spectacular fringed petals. Flowers April to May. 50cm. USDA 3a-8b.

7 *T.* 'Bastogne'
Blood-red Triumph tulip, lightly scented. Flowers April to May. 40cm.

8 *T.* 'Beauty of Spring'
A large, yellow flower feathered with red. It's particularly effective planted en masse or in small groups in the border. Flowers April. 50cm.

9 *T.* 'Black Parrot'
Glamorous, smouldering and divinely decadent. What's not to like? Flowers late April to May. 55-60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.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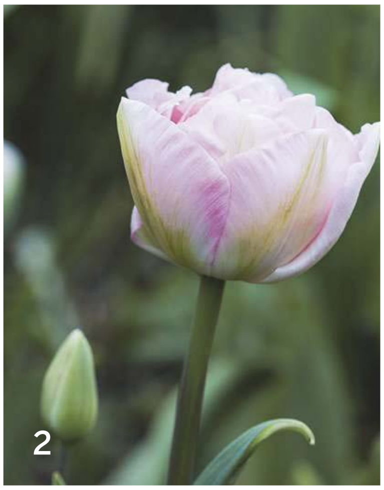
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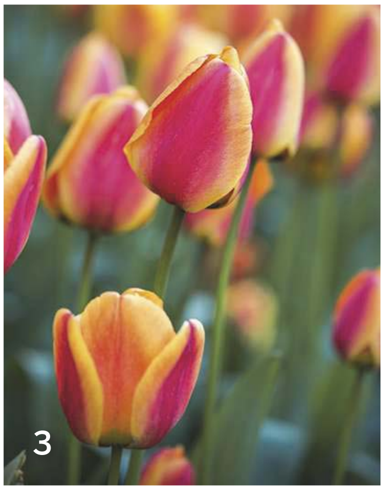
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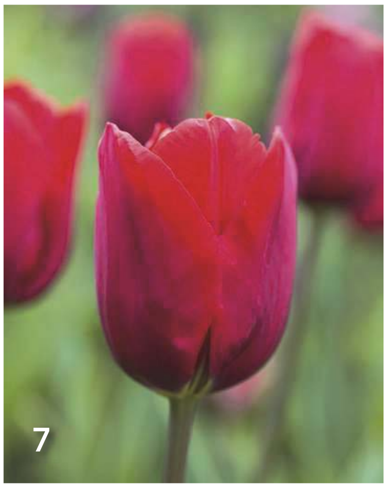
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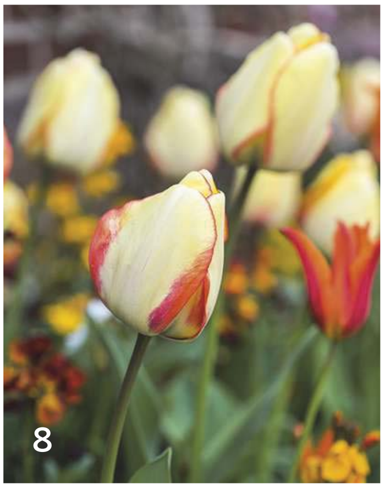
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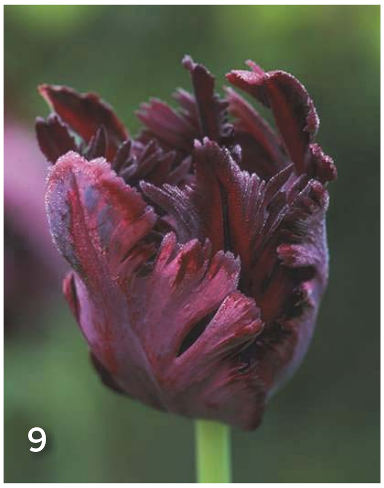
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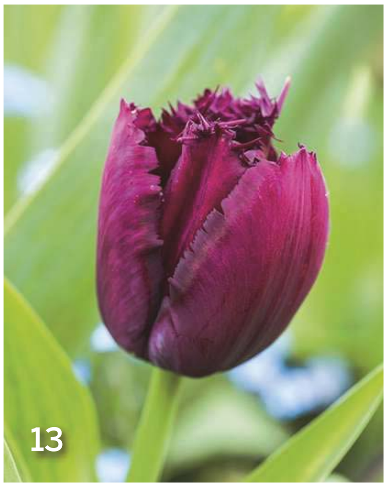
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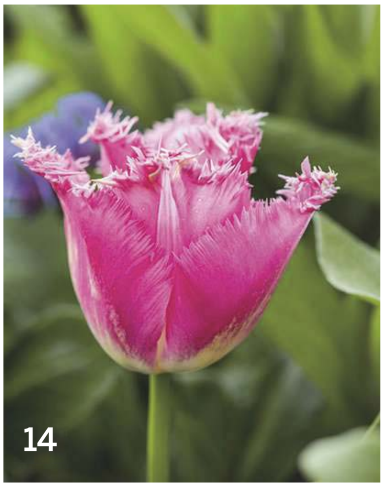
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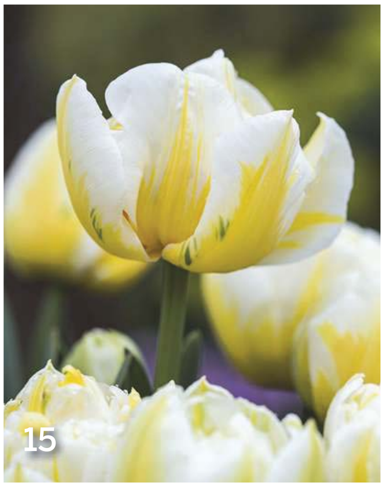
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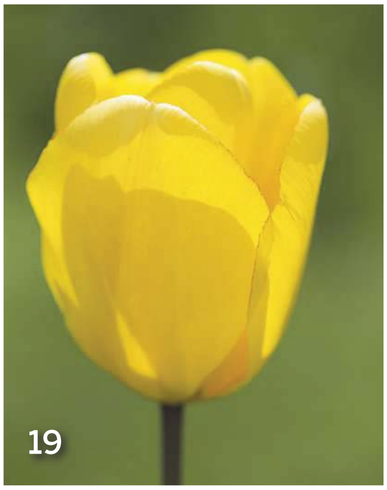
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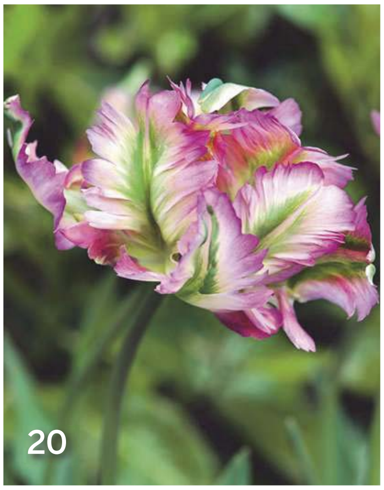
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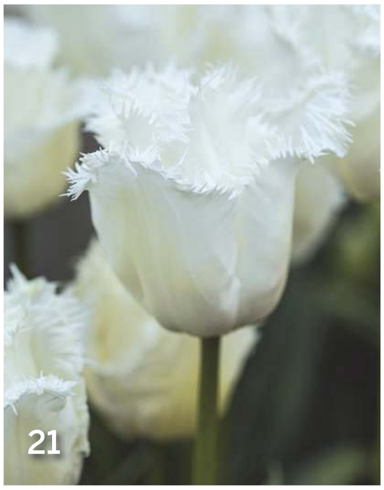
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* Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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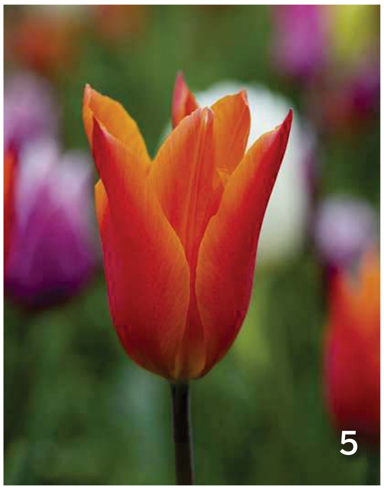
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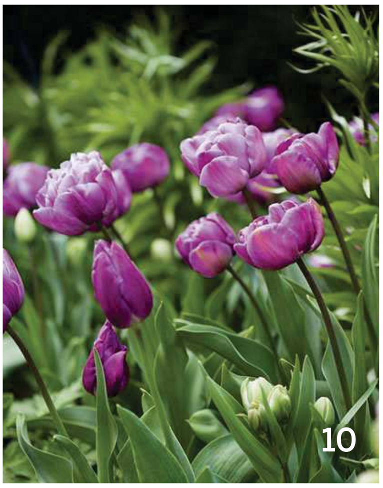
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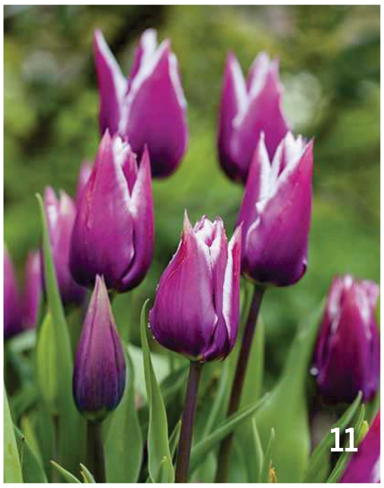
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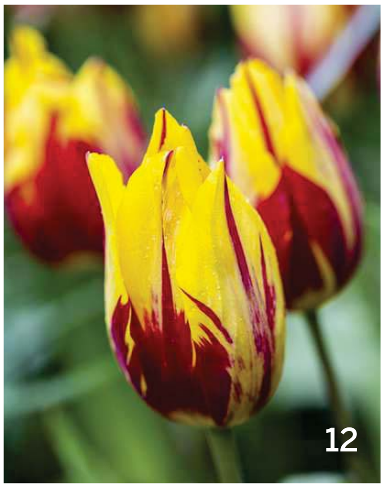
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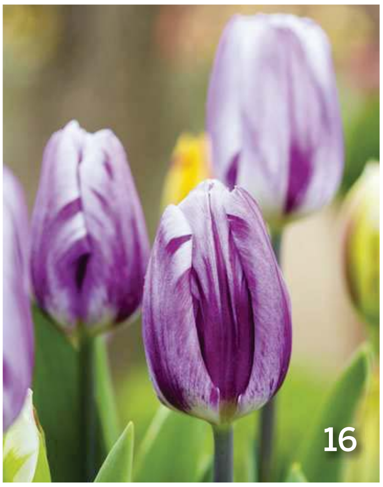
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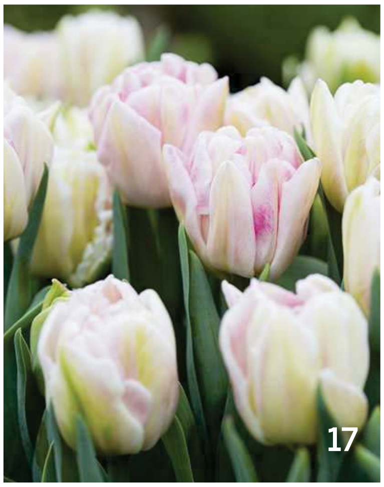
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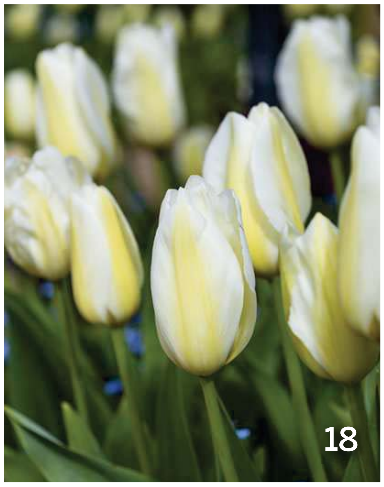
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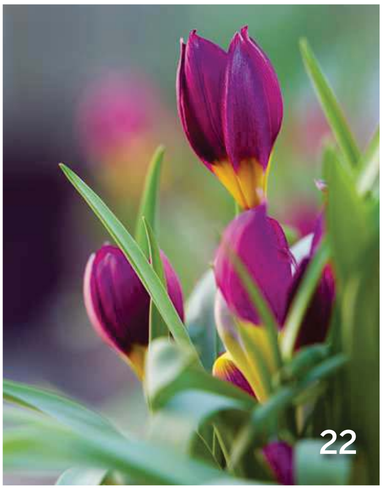
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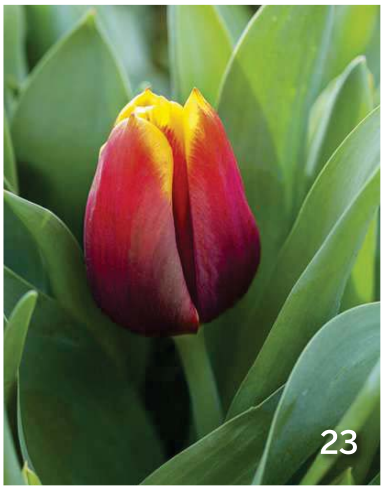
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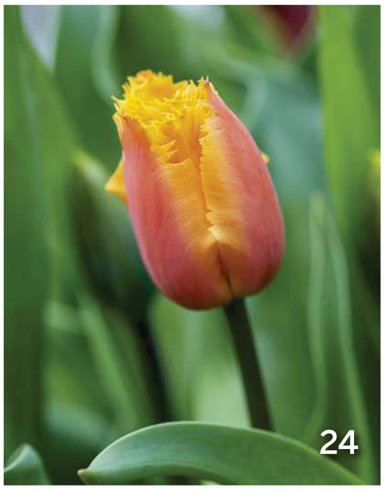
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6 VISIONS, 9 JO WHITWORTH, BOTH GAP PHOTOS, 20 ANDREA JONES IMAGES, 22 LEE BEEL, BOTH ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

10 *T.* 'Blue Diamond'
Blowsy, peony-like, violet blooms open early and last a long time. Flowers April to May. 45cm. USDA 3a-8b.

11 *T.* 'Claudia'
Lily-flowered, reddish purple tinged with white. Stunning in either borders or pots. Flowers early May. 45cm. USDA 3a-9b.

12 *T.* 'Colour Spectacle'
Flaming yellow and red colour, and multi-flowering, this tulip is aptly named. A fitting finale to the end of the tulip season. Flowers late April to May. 45-50cm.

13 *T.* 'Curly Sue'
A deliciously bruised, fringed tulip. Flowers end of April to early May. 45cm.

14 *T.* 'Fancy Frills'
As its name suggests, this frothy pink and white-fringed tulip is one for the boudoir. Flowers May. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6.

15 *T.* 'Flaming Evita'
In full bloom, this peony tulip resembles a lightly whipped and delectable omelette. Flowers early to mid April. 35cm.

16 *T.* 'Flaming Flag'
Deep-purple flames running up the outside of pure-white petals. Surprisingly hardy and weather-resistant, it is especially easy to grow.
Flowers April. 45-55cm.

17 *T.* 'Foxtrot'
A Double Early to die for, the colour of old rose becoming more intense as it ages. Suitable for indoor planting and early forcing from end of February.
Flowers April. 40cm. AGM.
RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

18 *T.* 'Françoise'
Tall and elegant, late-flowering Triumph tulip. Soft yellow turning to creamy white. Flowers May. 55cm.

19 *T.* 'Golden Apeldoorn'
Tall and sturdy, one of the best Darwin Hybrids and a reliable perennial. Flowers April. 60cm. USDA 4a-11.

20 *T.* 'Green Wave'
A sport from *T.* 'Groenland'. Wavy green flowers open to a delicate watermelon pink. It flowers forever in late spring, and can last up to three weeks as a cut flower. Flowers May. 50-55cm.

21 *T.* 'Honeymoon'
Silky, fringed, pure-white flowers on sturdy stems. Especially effective in pots. Flowers from early May. 50cm. USDA 3a-8b.

22 *T. humilis* 'Persian Pearl'
A beautiful, miniature species tulip in magenta-rose with a bright-yellow centre and bronze-green flame on the outer petal. Flowers March to April. 10cm.
RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

23 *T.* 'Kees Nelis'
A vibrant red tulip, with a yellow edge. Sturdy flowers on sturdy stems. Truly a triumph. Flowers early May.
30-40cm. USDA 3a-7b.

24 *T.* 'Lambada'
Salmon-orange petals with sassy yellow feather-edging make for a stunning combination. Flowers May. 50cm.
AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9a.

Turn the page for more tulips

48 tulips (continued)

25 *T. linifolia*
Miniature blooms with fire-engine red flowers, open, pointed stars with purple centres. Flowers early April. 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

26 *T.* 'Margarita'
With its pale-edged, rich, pinkish-magenta petals and soft, sweet fragrance, the peony-shaped 'Margarita' is perfect for pots or the front of a border. Flowers late April. 40cm. USDA 3a-8b.

27 *T.* 'Mondial'
The icy white of this Early Double shines out in the spring garden – even at dusk. Gently scented, lovely in pots or front of a border or planted en masse. Flowers April. 20-30cm. USDA 3a-8b.

28 *T.* 'Monte Carlo'
Show-stopping, lemon-yellow flowers. Thrives in full sun, but happy in partial shade. Flowers April to May. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

29 *T.* 'Monte Orange'
A sunny yellow centre lights up brilliant, tangerine-orange blooms. Soft fragrance too. Flowers early to mid April. 35cm.

30 *T.* 'Negrita'
The classic purple tulip: perennial and robust. One of finest Triumphs, good on its own or in large drifts. Flowers April to early May. 45cm.USDA 3a-7b.

31 *T.* 'Olympic Flame'
Mimosa yellow with scarlet flames swirling up from the base of the flower. Flowers April. 55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

32 *T.* 'Oxford'
A fiery perennial with a soft vanilla scent. Its flashy, bright-red flowers will provide a real focal point in Arundel's grass labyrinth this year. Flowers April to May. 60-75cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

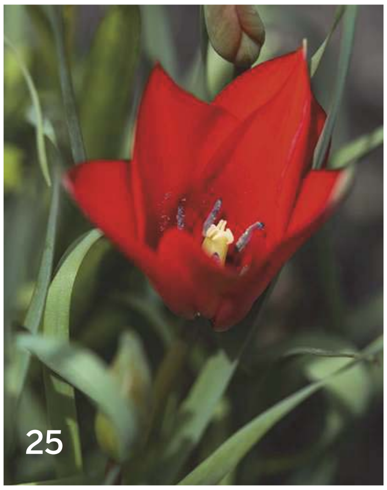
33 *T.* 'Paul Scherer'
Sultry, purple, almost-black, egg-shaped flower on tall, upright, strong stems. Flowers April to May. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

34 *T.* 'Perestroyka'
At a distance, it's a warm reddish-salmon; up close it's scarlet with coral edges and a tiny yellow base. Either way, it's gorgeous. Find it in Arundel's tropical borders. Flowers late April to early May. 70cm. USDA 4b-9b.

35 *T.* 'Pink Impression'
The saying 'in the pink' might have been specially coined for this tulip with the deep-rose petals at its centre, fading to softer pink around the edges. All beautifully set off by silver-green leaves. Flowers end of April. 55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-11.

36 *T.* 'Purple Dream'
This Lily-flowered tulip opens out on sunny spring days revealing a delicate ivory heart. Flowers end of April, early May. 50-60cm. USDA 3a-8b.

37 *T.* 'Queensland'
Double, candy-pink ruffles with a deep, frosty-white fringe. Flowering late in the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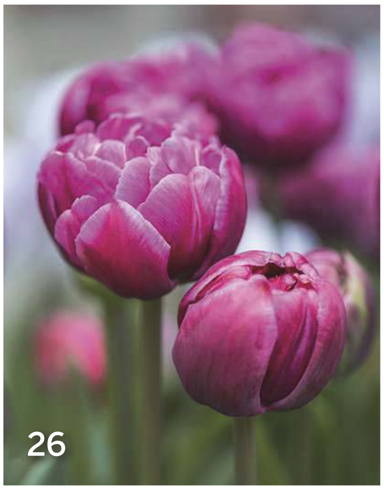
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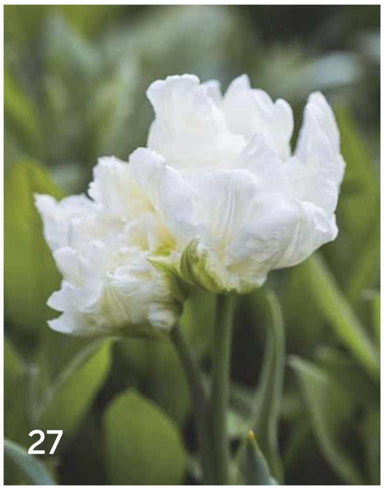
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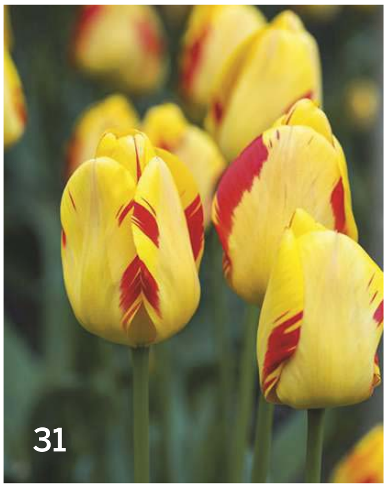
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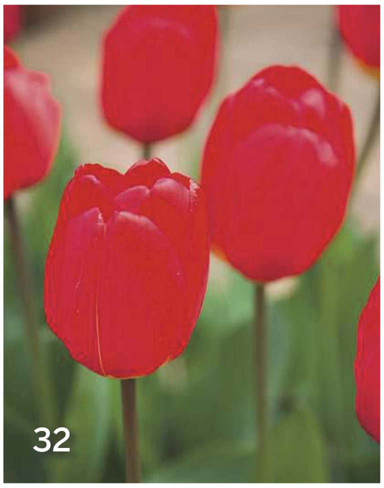
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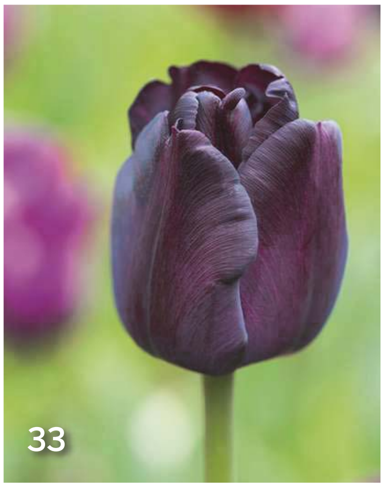
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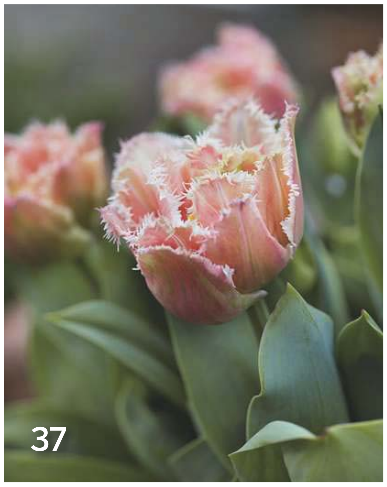
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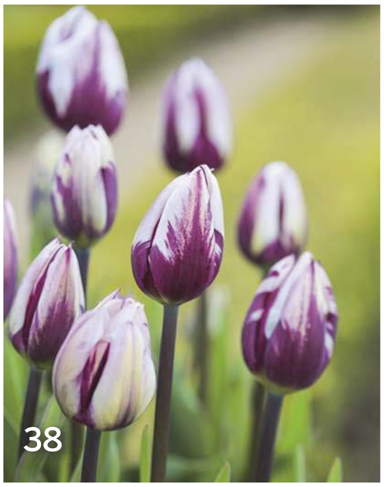
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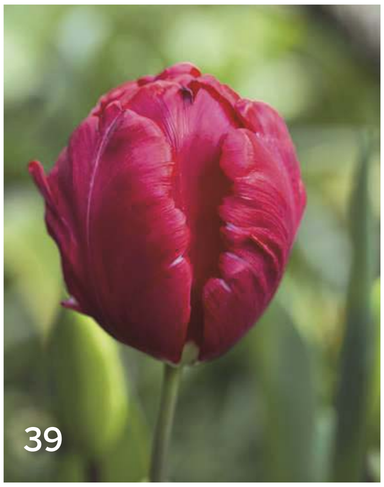
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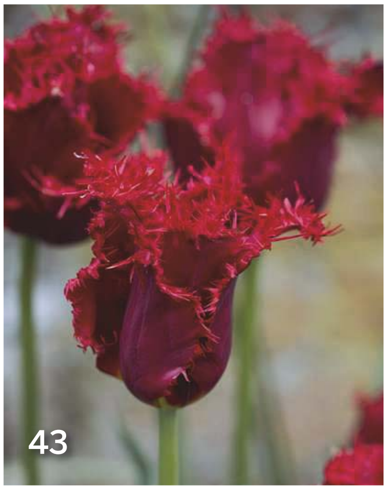
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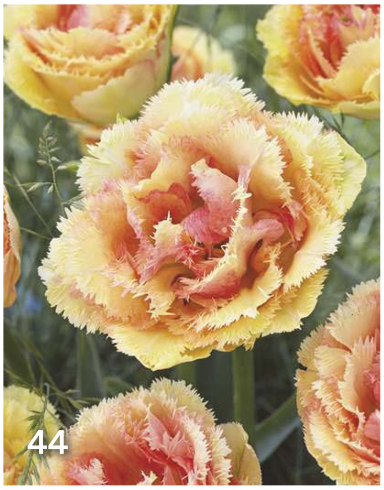
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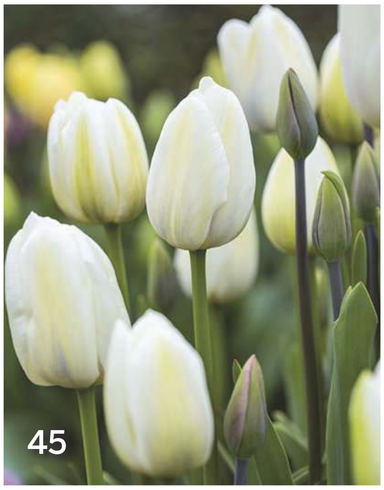
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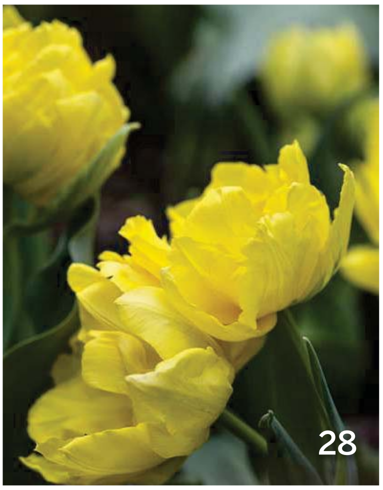
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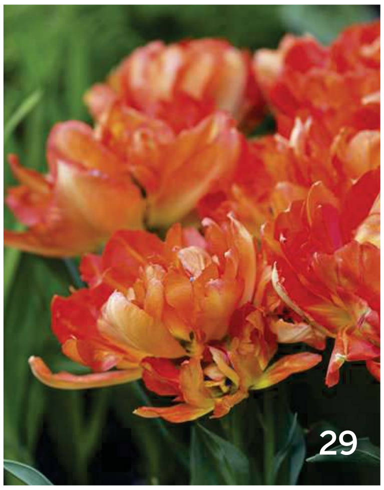
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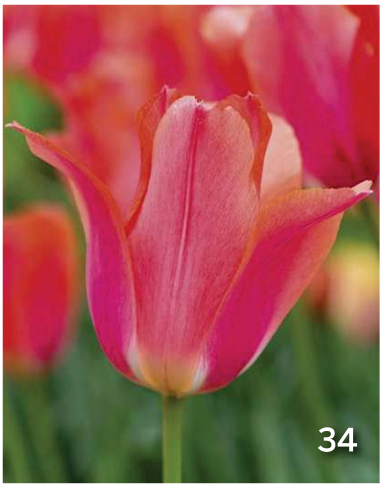
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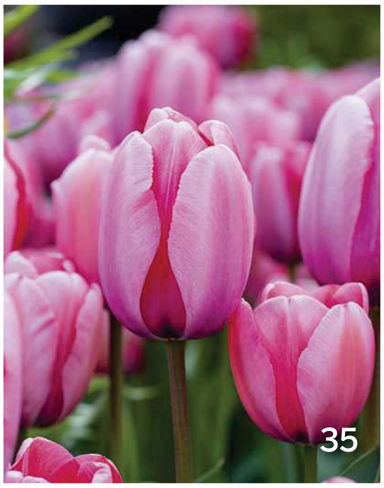
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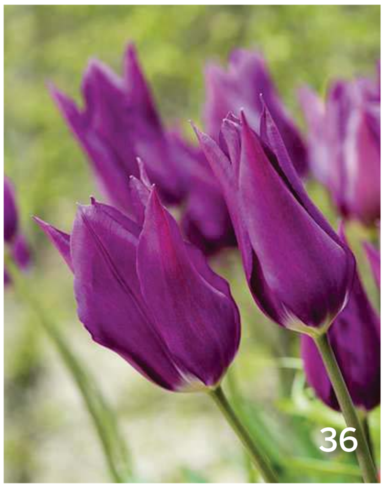
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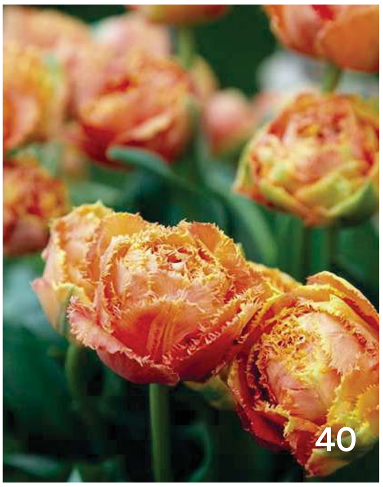
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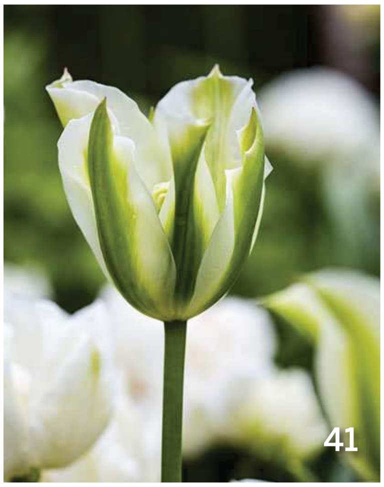
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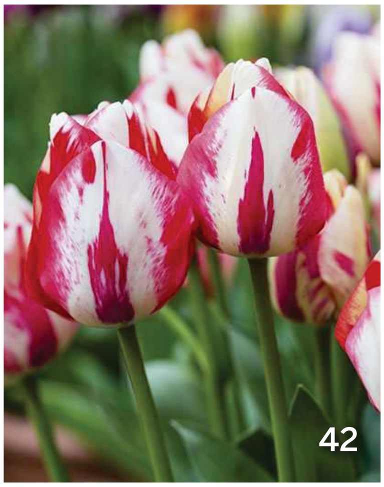
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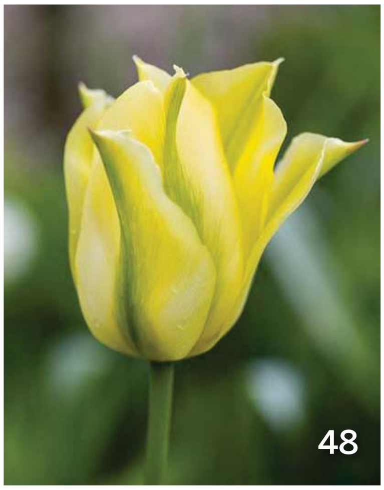
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32 LINDSAY CONSTABLE, 34 MBP-PLANTS, 40 REX MAY, ALL ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, 44 VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS

season, this is one of the last tulips standing in the garden. Flowers mid May. 25cm.

38 *T.* 'Rems Favourite'
Bred to look like a classic Rembrandt tulip – but actually modern, strong and long flowering – with purple and green veining over ivory. Flowers April. 50cm. USDA 4a-9a.

39 *T.* 'Rococo'
Frilly, flamboyant, fire-engine red and fabulous in pots with wall flowers. Flowers mid April to early May. 35cm. USDA 3a-8b.

40 *T.* 'Sensual Touch'
Unusual, fully double, fringed tulip with blooms the colour of a blazing sunset. Flowers April to May. 40cm. AGM. RHS H6.

41 *T.* 'Spring Green'
A classic green and ivory tulip that is reliably perennial. It is a long-standing cottage garden favourite and glorious in pots. Flowers end of April to May. 45-50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

42 *T.* 'Spryng'
This new cross between a Darwin Hybrid and a Triumph tulip has the best of both: strong stems and huge, long-lasting flowers. White with red flames – the tulip equivalent of seaside rock. Flowers April to May. 55-60cm. AGM. RHS H6.

43 *T.* 'Valery Gergiev'
Fiery, fringed and uncompromisingly crimson. Will deliver high drama to a sunny border. Flowers April. 40cm. USDA 3a-9b.

44 *T.* 'Vaya Con Dios'
This delicately frilly tulip in shades of red, orange and yellow brings to mind an evening sunset or a delicious peach melba. Flowers April to May. 50cm.

45 *T.* 'White Prince'
A Single Early tulip excellent for planting with hyacinths, narcissi and species tulips. Suitable for forcing from the beginning of January. Ideal for wedding flowers. Flowers early April. 35cm.

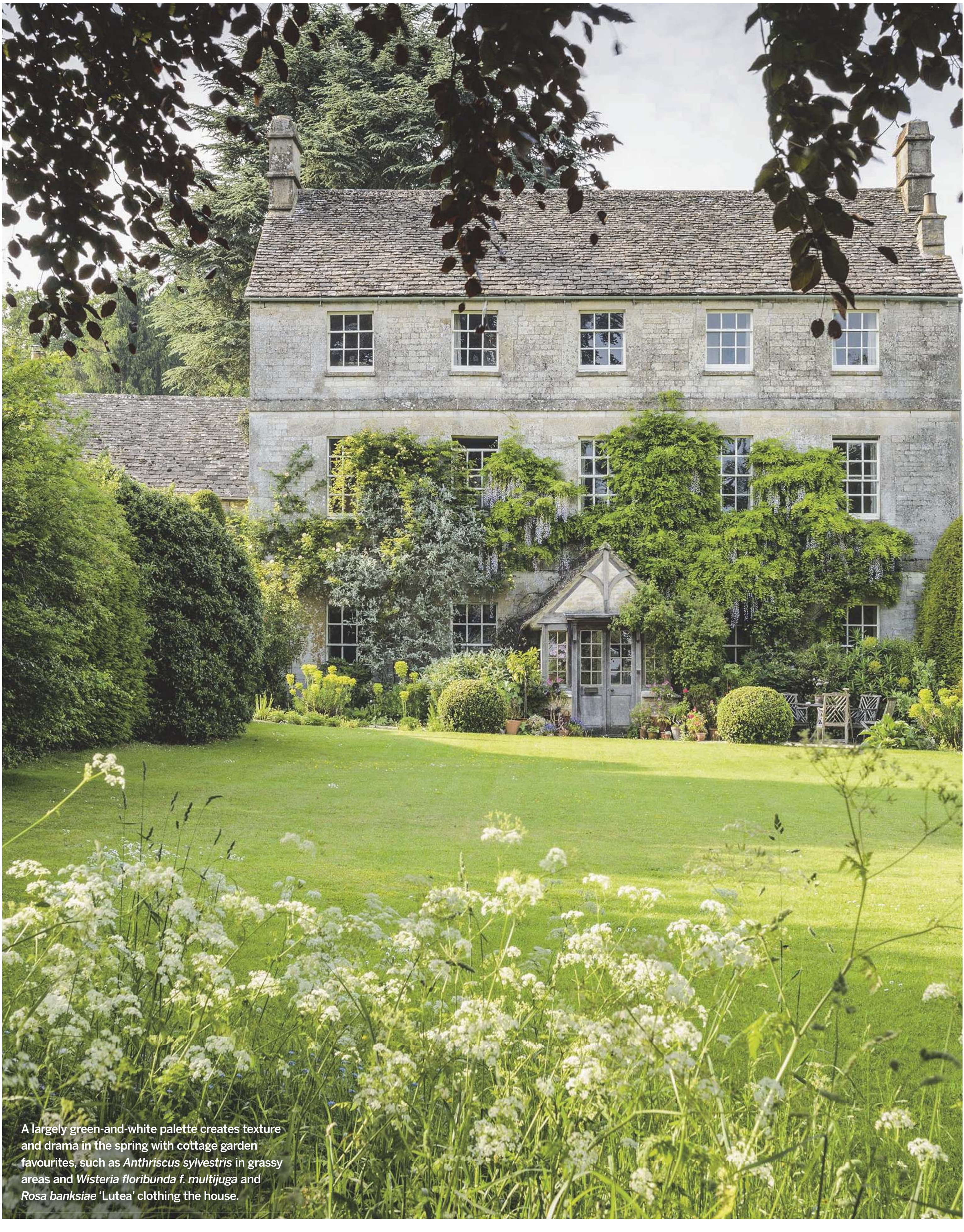
46 *T.* 'White Triumphator'
Poised, elegant and pure white: a classic tulip. Flowers April to May 50-60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

47 *T.* 'Willem van Oranje'
A compact, upright, perennial with double, bowl-shaped, bright-orange, flowers streaked with red. Divinely showy and flamboyant. Flowers April. 35cm. USDA 3a-7b.

48 *T.* 'Yellow Spring Green'
Zesty yellow petals, each flushed with a perfectly contrasting lime-green stripe bring a zing to spring. Flowers end of April to May. 40cm.

Where to buy

- **Avon Bulbs**
  Tel 01460 242177, avonbulbs.co.uk
- **Jacques Amand International**
  Tel 020 8420 7110, jacquesamandintl.com
- **Peter Nyssen**
  Tel 0161 747 4000, peternyssen.com
- **J Parker's**
  Tel 0161 848 1100, jparkers.co.uk


A largely green-and-white palette creates texture and drama in the spring with cottage garden favourites, such as *Anthriscus sylvestris* in grassy areas and *Wisteria floribunda f. multijuga* and *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea' clothing the house.

In brief

Name The Old Rectory.
What Designer Mary Keen's own garden with strong structure and colourful planting.
Where Gloucestershire.
Size One and three quarter acres.
Soil 'Cotswold Brash' – free-draining limestone.
Climate 150m above sea level, so colder than much of southwest England, but the frost does drain away.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

From major to minor

In the second of our four visits to the garden of writer and designer Mary Keen, we see how the broad strokes of winter structure make way for planting in a more delicate key

WORDS MARY KEEN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

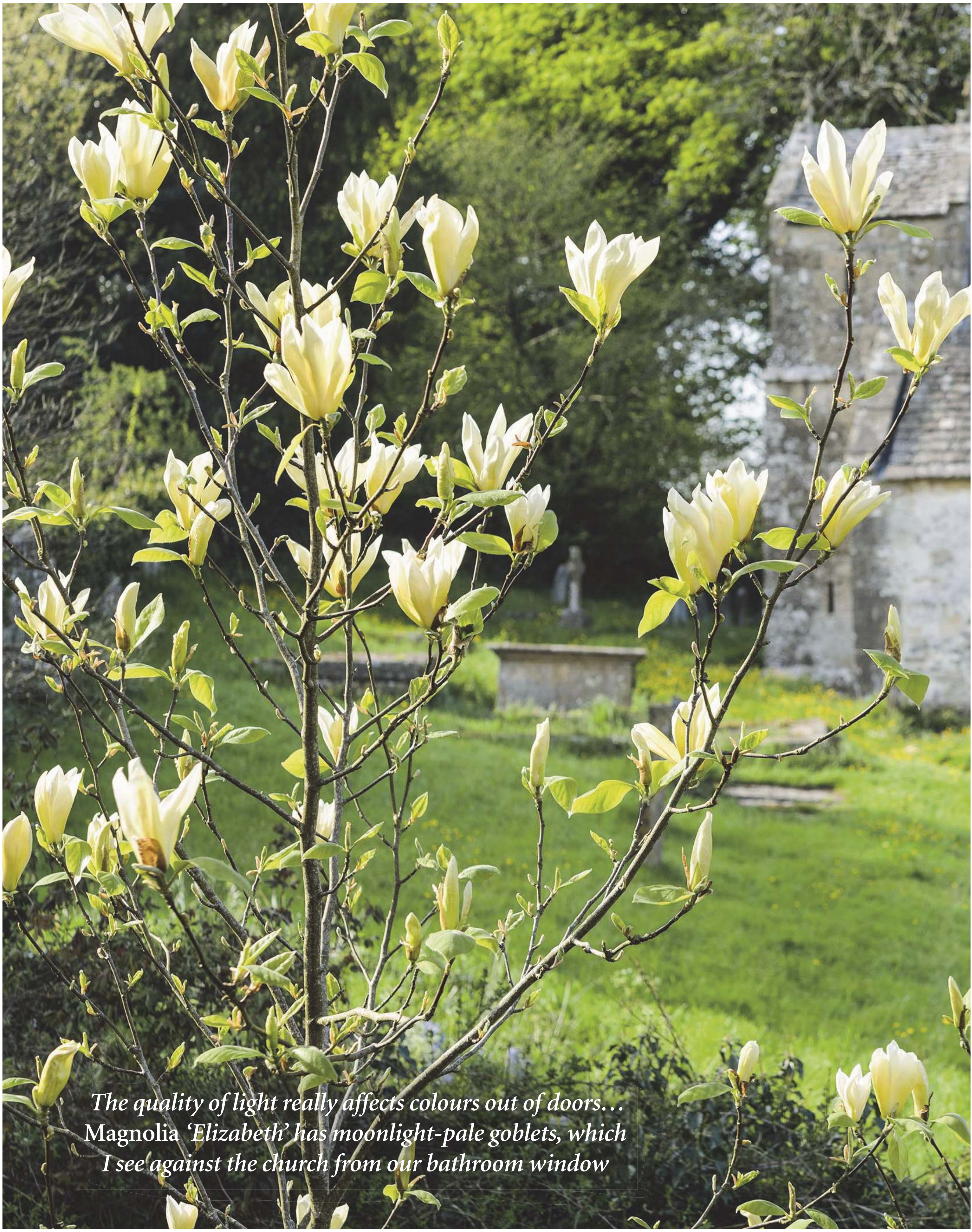
Spring is the gentlest, greenest moment of the year. Town gardens have golden forsythia and shocking-pink cherry blossom to brighten grey streets, but if you live in the country everything is so beautiful, it seems pointless to compete. I love cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), but try not to let it take the place over. I refer to it as Queen Anne's lace and cut it as soon as it sets seed. On the house there is a yellow Banksian rose (*Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea'). The white version is scented and I wish I could grow it, but only warmer gardens are that lucky. Our south-facing wall is much too crowded, the windows are only four feet apart, which is tricky for expansive climbers. I tried a *Magnolia grandiflora* in the corner next to the hedge but it ran out of room very quickly. By July the house looks like Miss Havisham's hall in *Great Expectations*. I like the shady greenery hanging round the windows so that in summer, you can only see out through a curtain of leaves. If I were tidier, I might stick to well-trained roses and clematis, with clipped myrtles. But we inherited the wisteria, which is the beautiful long-racemed form *W. floribunda* f. *multijuga*. Wisterias can take so long to flower when you buy them, that one as floriferous as this is worth keeping. If you do want to plant a wisteria, buy one that already has flowers, or you could wait years for your plant to perform.

The *Buddleja agathosma*, to the left of the front door, tangles with the Banksia and has tiny, scented, mauve flowers in April. It is not bone hardy so in some years there are no flowers, but the giant silver leaves are spectacular all summer. All these climbers are late spring features, but later on, the yellow rose 'Leverkusen' and *Clematis* 'Perle d'Azur' weave through the wisteria. If I were starting again, I would choose *C.* 'Prince Charles', which is also blue and flowers for longer, sometimes until August. To the left of the Banksia, *Rosa* 'Alchymist' grabs a space. Far too many things I know, and the deadheading on high is no fun at all. As I get older, I dislike being on ladders, but a sturdy, tripod topiary ladder feels as safe as firm ground.

It was interesting moving from a brick Berkshire rectory to a stone one. Yellow never looked right against red brick but it is perfect on stone, where white and pale pink can look washed out. Dark-red roses can work on both but my favourite 'Guinée' failed, as it often does. 'Étoile de Hollande' is lovely but a bit heavy headed.

Climbers, especially vigorous ones, are work. Having a structure of vine eyes and wires to tie plants in firmly is vital. Some people use trellis, but that can be very conspicuous when the leaves are down and it quickly looks dilapidated. We did use a custom-made, wire-framed trellis for one client, which was beautiful.

Turn the page for Mary's advice on natural planting for spring



The quality of light really affects colours out of doors… Magnolia 'Elizabeth' has moonlight-pale goblets, which I see against the church from our bathroom window

Nature's light and shade

Shades and textures of green are everywhere. This is mostly a delicate minor key moment in the garden. The quality of light really affects colours out of doors. The lime greens of *Euphorbia* **(1)** and *Molopospermum peloponnesiacum* **(2)** look fresh now, whereas in summer that colour can look too acid. *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' **(main picture, left)** has moonlight-pale goblets, which I see against the church from our bathroom window. The books say it needs neutral-to-acid soil, but sometimes you can challenge received wisdom and find that a plant will succeed where others decree it might fail. 'Cotswold Brash' soil suits 'Elizabeth' perfectly well, but it is well drained and the place is shady and sheltered, so that may help too. An orchard is beautiful at any time of year. Beneath the trees, mown paths through long grass **(3)** are a favourite feature of mine. The best time is when the long grass on either side of the path is studded with old pheasant's eye (*Narcissus poeticus* var. *recurvus*), which is far more desirable than the commonly substituted *N*. 'Actaea' and flowers at the end of a long season of bulbs here. Earlier, the ground is covered with the wild *N. pseudonarcissus* and some collected forms of old *N. poeticus* cultivars brought from gardens where I have worked – with permission from the owner. I have a weakness for the older forms of less showy plants and I am also susceptible to the simpler forms of bearded iris. The ox-eye daisies and a few *Geranium pratense* follow the daffodils. They are not as abundant as they once were, because it is too shady for them. In any wildflower mix, the daisies get off to a head start and then slowly diminish over the years. I know too, that the seed mix I bought so long ago contained the larger European form of daisy and if I were starting again, I would insist on the English native form. The cloudy shaped rosemary bushes **(4)** ▷

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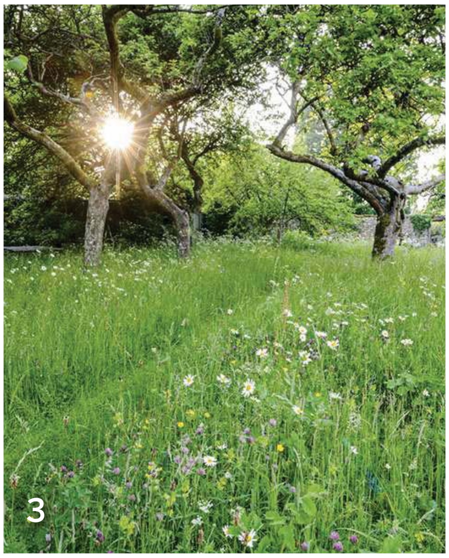

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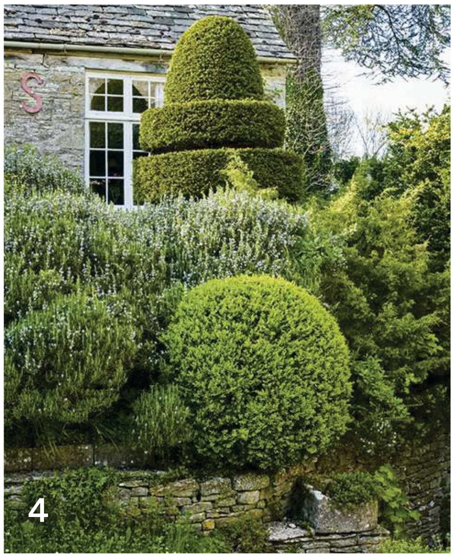

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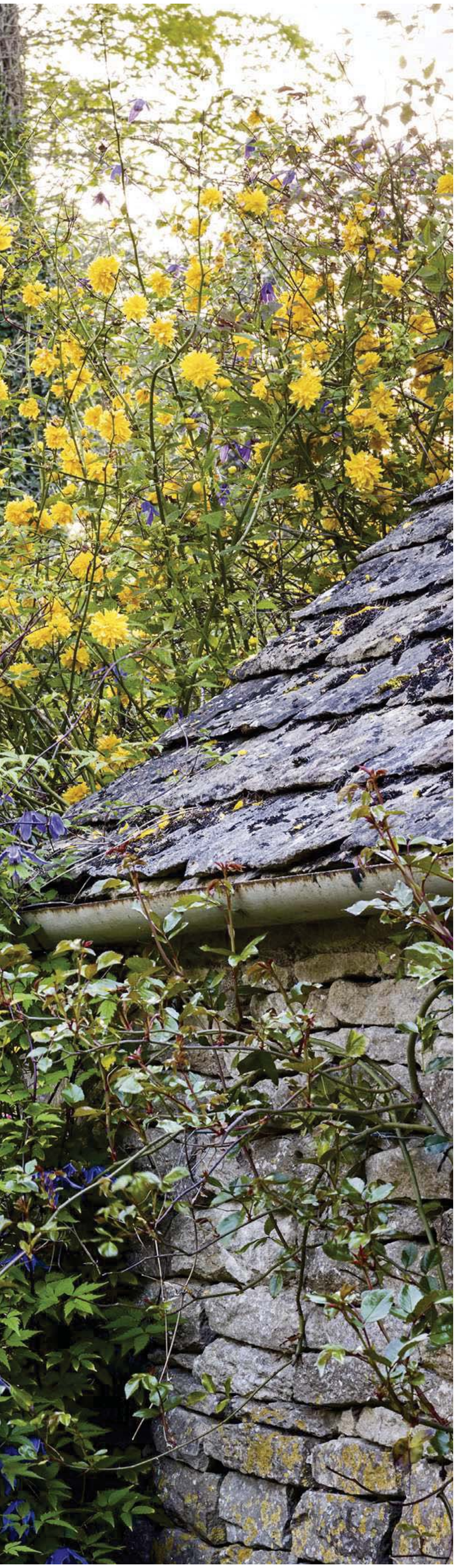
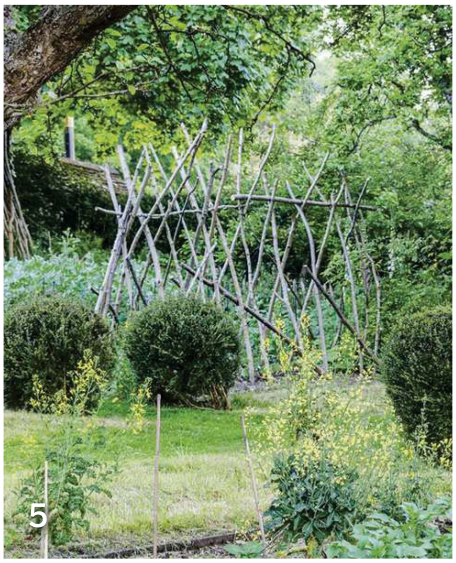
Rules are made to be broken. Especially the ones you make for yourself. …Gardens are all the better for the odd departure from good taste



▷ flower imperceptibly in palest blue, but they smell terrific. When the flowers fade, we clip them into humps and hollows.

As well as preferring simple forms of flowers, I also like humble effects and cottage plants. The row of home-made bean poles **(5)** that my husband puts up every year gives me as much pleasure as any garden ornament. And apple blossom **(6)** is to me, more beautiful than the rarest rhododendron. '*Kerria japonica*?' high horticulturists ask with an uncomprehending stare, when they see the unruly yellow bush near the churchyard door **(main picture, left)**. But this is a cottage garden favourite and it was here when we came, so although its sunny double flowers are not in the same league as the pale *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' further up the border, I cherish it. With the *Clematis macropetala* 'Maidwell Hall' it makes a rowdy picture, but rules are made to be broken. Especially the ones that you make for yourself. A garden that is too self conscious can be very dull. Woven into every Persian carpet was a deliberate mistake. Gardens too, are all the better for the odd departure from good taste. Welsh poppies **(7)** in the same sunny gold as the kerria are allowed to seed themselves everywhere. I am less indulgent with the orange ones, because, like the great landscape architect Nan Fairbrother, I believe that 'sameness is all' and that if you have room, the beauty of one thing will always have more power than too much variety. The things that give me real pleasure here are the naturalised plants; the blue *Anemone blanda* in the dell, the *Cyclamen coum* and the *Crocus tommasinianus*. I like it when plants naturalise because it shows they are happy. The blue perennial form of *Lunaria* **(8)**, which grows wild in Corfu has replaced the biennial, dark-flowered form. It can be too rampant for some, but the luminous blue of the flowers is like nothing else early in the year and it also flowers off and on into winter. I brought seed of this back from Corfu and Derry Watkins of Special Plants now sells it as *Lunaria* 'Corfu Blue' – although it is better known as *Lunaria annua* 'Corfu Blue'. ▷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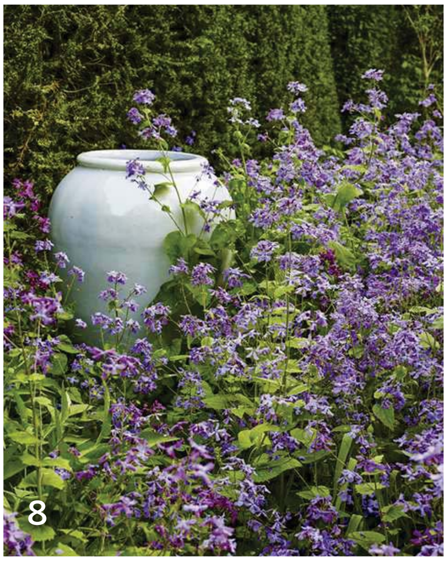
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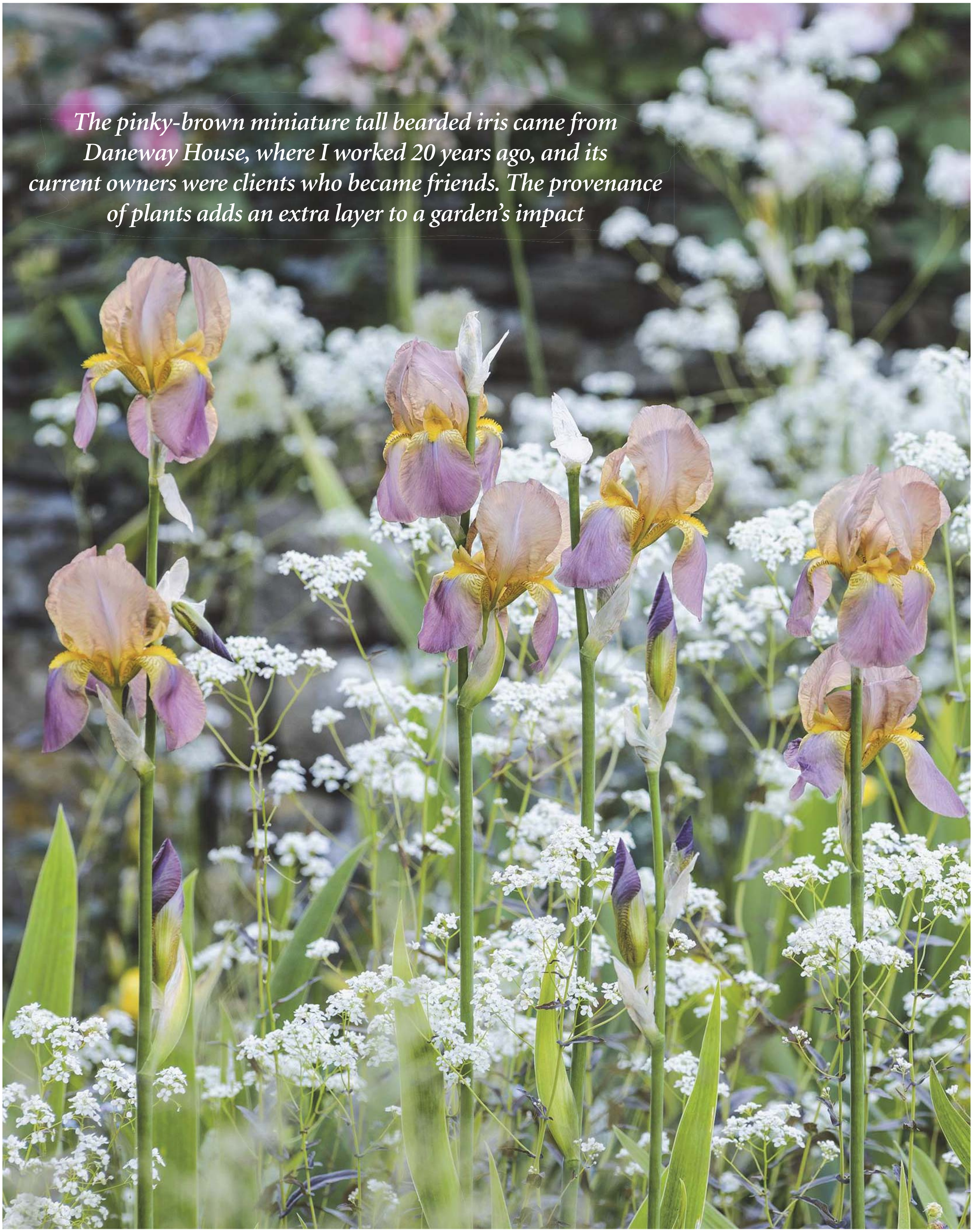
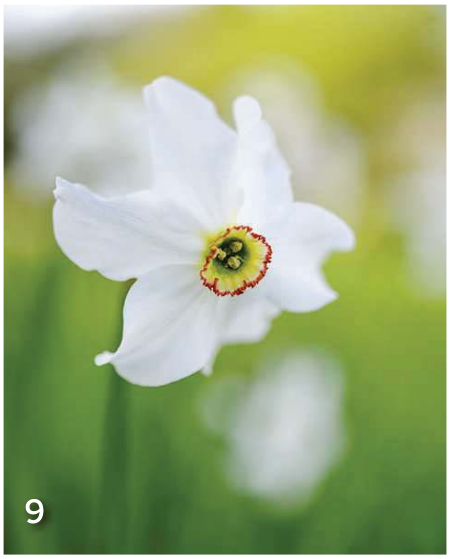


The pinky-brown miniature tall bearded iris came from Daneway House, where I worked 20 years ago, and its current owners were clients who became friends. The provenance of plants adds an extra layer to a garden's impact

Plant interest

The garden at home is very different from the work I do for clients. In spring there are flowers too delicate or tricksy to grow in gardens where the concentration on detail can never be as intense as it is for an owner in their garden every day. I know where *Cyclamen repandum* hides itself under the yew hedge, I am poised for the brief moment when the *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* flowers and know to wait for the last and prettiest of the scented narcissus, the old pheasant's eye **(9)**. Clients with weekend houses could miss these precious timings. Irises, especially the fragile ones I love most, need deadheading every day to look their best. The pinky-brown miniature tall bearded iris **(main picture, left)** came from Daneway House, where I worked 20 years ago. It has a double association for me. Oliver Hill the landscape architect once lived at Daneway and its current owners were clients who became friends. The provenance of plants adds an extra layer to a garden's impact. Other irises appear above a haze of an odd but worthwhile plant that runs through the beds where they grow. *Peltaria alliacea* has pale-purple leaves and flowers like miniature Queen Anne's lace, so it has a long season of interest, but can be pulled out to give the irises room to ripen their rhizomes. Tiny tulips, such as *Tulipa* 'Lady Jane' **(10)**, repay closer inspection than the large lily-flowered ones. Auriculas **(11)** are an endless fiddle, but an enjoyable one. They are plants that demand up-close and personal attention to appreciate their crazy colourings and they smell delicious occupying the tiers of shelves in the one-time privy with a glass roof. In the greenhouse, pelargoniums are another early season treat. *Pelargonium* 'Copthorne', 'Clorinda', 'Sweet Mimosa' and 'Vera Dillon' are showy favourites but the tiny *P.* 'Ardens' **(12)** is the one I would never want to lose. □



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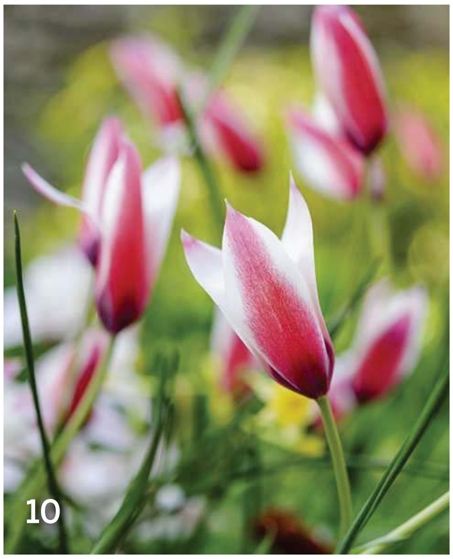

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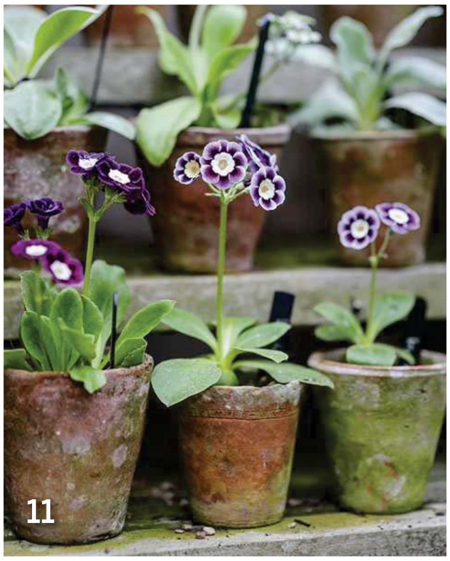

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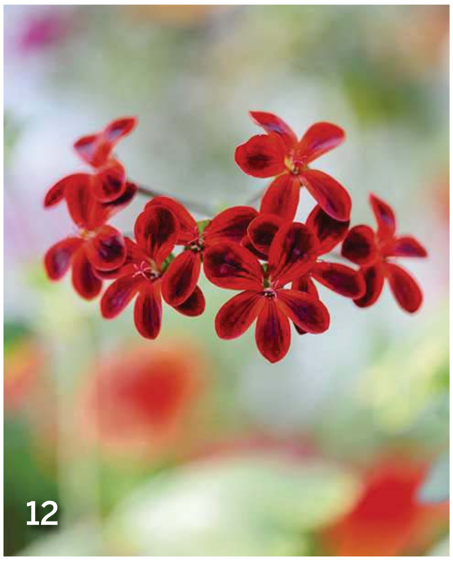

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From a distance you would hardly know that Thea and Dirk van Maldegem's garden was there at all. It lies like an oasis in the flat agricultural countryside of Walcheren, one of several islands that make up the Dutch province of Zeeland. All you see from afar is a shelter belt of shrubs and tall, white poplars. Those poplars are precious; they were among the first trees planted when, after flooding on the island towards the end of the Second World War, sea water killed off all the vegetation.

In the midst of this open countryside sits Thea and Dirk's cottage garden where for the past 30 years the couple have aimed to garden in an eco-friendly way – despite one small lapse. Theirs is a garden of two halves: one a partly wild, natural garden where a small wildflower meadow slopes down towards a large pond around which in spring drifts of *Leucojum aestivum* flower on the margins, and anemones and snowdrops are naturalised beneath the poplars that stand sentry against the salt-laden winds; the other a more formal Dutch cottage garden. When I first visited the garden seven years ago [issue 160, page 30] the difference between these two gardens was far more marked, with the formal garden clearly defined by box hedges. Today, the lines between the two areas are more blurred, there's a looser feel to the cottage garden and when I recently revisited the garden I asked Thea and Dirk how this change had come about.

Since my last visit the formal part of the garden has changed drastically. Why these changes?

Thea It's not just the garden that has changed. It's us as well. We are in a different phase of our lives now. When we started the garden 30 years ago we had children, now we have grandchildren. Back then our aim was enclosure. Now we feel the need for more openness and space.

So has it been a gradual evolution?

Dirk No, not at all. It all started when our box became ill. The leading theme in the garden was the intricate pattern of box hedges.

Thea We panicked. We sprayed the box with fungicides, even

Tips for creating an eco-friendly garden

Don't be too tidy. Collect dead stalks and withered foliage in spring.

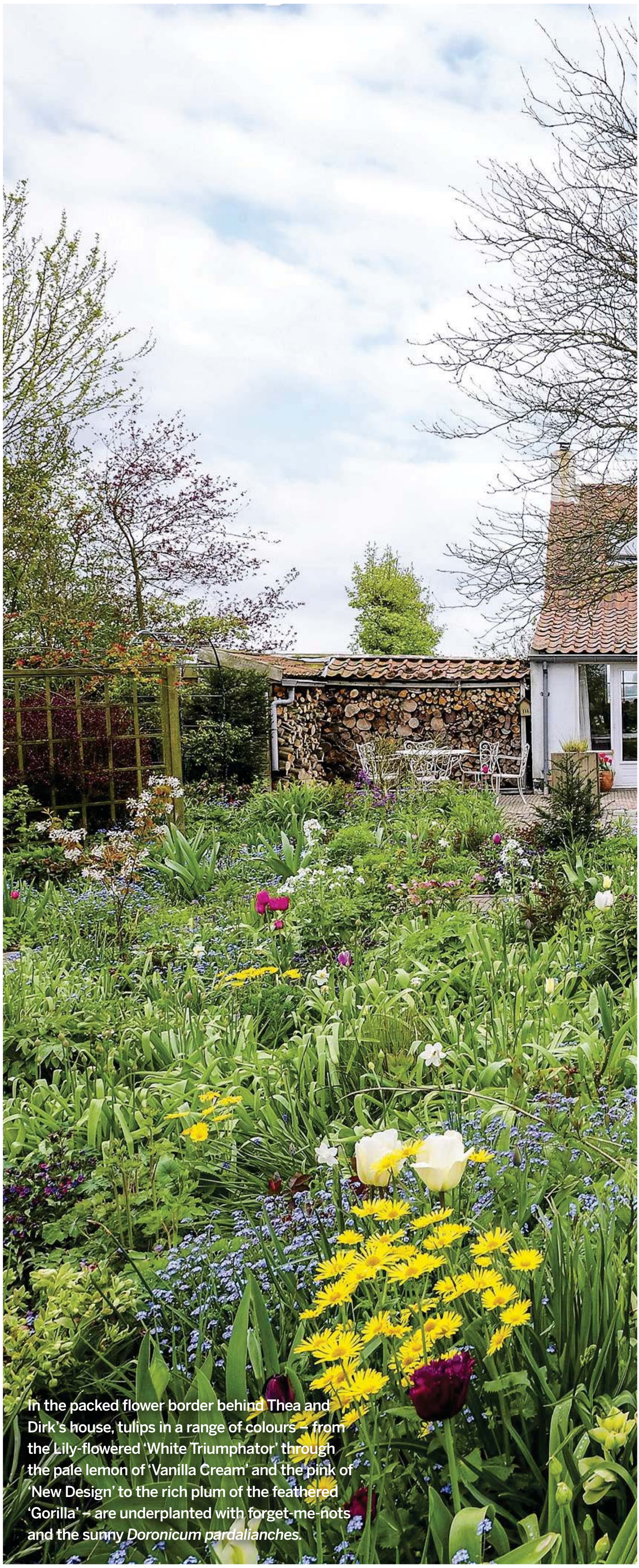
Save all your prunings and build dead hedges round the perimeter of the garden. Don't use rose or fruit-tree prunings as these can spread fungal diseases.

Compost all leaves. Oak leaves are acidic, so when composting them add lime. The organisms breaking down the leaves can't live in an acidic environment. With added lime, oak makes a good leaf mould.

Never dig, plough or rotavate. These activities disturb the delicate subterranean web of microbes, plant roots and beneficial fungi. Top dressing is better than digging.

Never use fungicides, herbicides or insecticides. A lot of fungi are beneficial and assist plant growth. Herbicides leave residues in the soil and water. Insecticides indirectly poison the whole food chain.

Gravel paths are better than hard paving. Some plants love to sow themselves in gravel, much more so than in regular garden soil.



In the packed flower border behind Thea and Dirk's house, tulips in a range of colours – from the Lily-flowered 'White Triumphator' through the pale lemon of 'Vanilla Cream' and the pink of 'New Design' to the rich plum of the feathered 'Gorilla' – are underplanted with forget-me-nots and the sunny *Doronicum pardalianches*.

In brief

What Eco-friendly cottage garden.
Where Just outside Oostkapelle, on the island of Walcheren, in the southwest of the Netherlands.
Size 3,000 square metres.
Climate Mild maritime.
Soil Sandy loam.
Hardiness rating USDA 9a.

Out of the box

When box blight forced Thea and Dirk van Maldegem to rip out their beloved box hedges, the couple took the opportunity to give their garden a more informal, colourful feel that works with nature

WORDS **ROMKE VAN DE KAA** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIETSKE DE VRIES**

▷ though spraying was against our convictions. But to no avail. We cut the hedges back but they didn't really recover. We waited for a year, wondering what to do next. Then we decided to change course and the box went. It was painful at first, but soon it felt like a liberation.

Dirk Changing the garden was not just a physical exercise. We had to let go of some old ideas; people change and so do gardens.

What have you altered?

Thea We made all the paths wider and left out hedges where they were before. The grandchildren love to race round the garden and in the old garden that was impossible.

Dirk Before we ripped out the box it was difficult to get around with the wheelbarrow. Now it is a lot easier.

Who pushes this wheelbarrow?

Dirk We both do. We share maintenance jobs, such as clipping the privet hedge, mowing the grass and keeping the paths free of weeds. And since I retired three years ago, I enjoy this more and more.

Thea One of the good things about gardening together is that it brings you closer to one another. Gardening can have a positive influence on a relationship. In our case anyway.

Have you been influenced by other gardens at all?

Thea You cannot help but be influenced by other gardens, even if it is only subconsciously. And of course there are so many new plants available compared to when we started 30 years ago. I love experimenting with new bulbs and perennials.

Your garden is described as an ecological cottage garden, can you explain what that means?

Thea We feel strongly that one should not use pesticides and herbicides in a garden. Gardening should not aim to destroy the ecosystem. Surrounded by farmland as we are, it is not possible to create a complete biological equilibrium, but that does not stop us from trying. The wildlife in the garden is nothing special: we get the usual animals, such as newts, toads, weasels, hedgehogs and quite a few birds, such as woodpeckers and tree creepers. A big thrill last summer was the discovery of a hornet moth, a rare moth that looks like a hornet and which only occurs on poplars. Ours, in this case.

What preparations do you make for spring?

Thea Each year I plant some tulips and a lot of small bulbs for naturalising. That is where my heart lies. Different species of *Scilla*, ▷

Main image

Next to a small timber pavilion is a surviving section of the box hedging that once gave the garden its formal backbone. To its left, a pretty mix of tulips, including the pinkish-red 'Doll's Minuet', the large, white 'Purissima' and the sugar pinks 'Menton' and 'Rosalie', create a colourful display in the beds.

Bottom row left to right

The former barn sheltered by a yew hedge is now a holiday let. It looks out on to a pretty, mixed border in which two small *Amelanchier lamarckii* are underplanted with *Brunnera macrophylla*, mauve honesty and several tulip cultivars.

Covering the path made from recycled bricks and tiles is a galvanised steel arbour tunnel, which was originally the base for a polytunnel. Over this have been trained several pear cultivars, including 'Gieser Wildeman' and 'Doyenné du Comice'. Cooking pears such as these are very common in Dutch gardens as *stoofpeertjes* – pears stewed in red wine or marsala – is a popular dish in the Netherlands. The chestnut fencing and gate marks the boundary with the wilder section of the garden.

Outside of the holiday-let cottage is a sunny brick terrace that looks out over the wildflower meadow to the pond. A group of dainty, white *Narcissus* 'Actaea' grow alongside the wooden pavilion, while in the densely planted border opposite, herbs, such as rosemary, provide a fragrant backdrop for summer dining.

"Getting rid of the box was painful at first, but soon it felt like a liberation"

Near the pond, the planting has a more natural feel with drifts of *Narcissus* 'Thalia'.

> *"Changing the garden was not just a physical exercise. We had to let go of some old ideas; people change and so do gardens"*

▷ *Corydalis* and anemones sow themselves and evolve naturally. Tulips are static, and have more decorative than ecological value. I scatter the tulips in the garden. I don't want to create a bulb field. I like the combination of tulip flowers and the foliage of perennials, such as bronze fennel, peonies and *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon'. For height I use *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*.

How do you manage to maintain such a densely planted garden?

Thea No one is allowed to weed but me. It is nearly impossible to move within the borders. To quote a friend: "I wish I were a ballerina, so I could dance between the plants." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

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Tel +31 (0)118 593 158.
Website gardenguesthouse.nl
Open In 2017: 21-22 April and 23-24 June, 10am-5pm, and at other times by appointment. Admission €3.50.

9 of Thea and Dirk's favourite plants for a spring garden

1 *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*
Few perennials have more of a presence in a garden all year round. Its greenish yellow flowers bring an extra layer of zing to spring planting schemes, but in all seasons it adds height and bulk to perennial plantings. 1.5m. RHS H4, USDA 8a-11†.

2 *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Valentine'
Formerly known as *Dicentra spectabilis* 'Valentine' this pretty bleeding heart with delicate red and white flowers stands out because of its dark grey-green leaves. 60cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Doronicum pardalianches*
Commonly known as crayfish leopard's bane, this bright-yellow, daisy-like flower is as close to floral sunshine as you are ever likely to find. It makes a good cut flower. 60cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Narcissus* 'Thalia'
One of the most graceful narcissi with nodding, pure-white flowers that work with everything. It does not spread quickly, but holds its ground. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-11.

5 *Helleborus* x *hybridus* 'Blue Lady'
Thea and Dirk love the rich, plum and grey shades of this hellebore, which they find works particularly well when it is grown among tulips. 45cm. USDA 4a-9b.

6 *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost'
A useful ground-cover plant with superior foliage that looks almost as though it has been dusted in frost. Its blue forget-me-not-like flowers in spring are a bonus. 40cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

7 *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign'
Thea and Dirk use a lot of pulmonarias, including *P.* 'Majesté', *P. longifolia* 'Bertram Anderson' and *P.* 'Diana Clare', but they love the way the unspotted leaves of this cultivar enhance the blue of the flowers. 35cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Amelanchier lamarckii*
A small tree that in the Netherlands is often used as a shrub. It offers lovely autumn foliage but its blossom makes it one of the most attractive spring shrubs. Great underplanted with *Scilla* or *Chionodoxa*. Can be pruned after flowering and makes a pretty informal hedge. 10m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

9 *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Giant Bronze'
Wonderful feathery foliage to accompany tulips, such as 'Purissima', 'Vanilla Cream' and 'Queen of Night'. Needs to be controlled, because it can self-sow freely. 1.8m. USDA 4a-9b.

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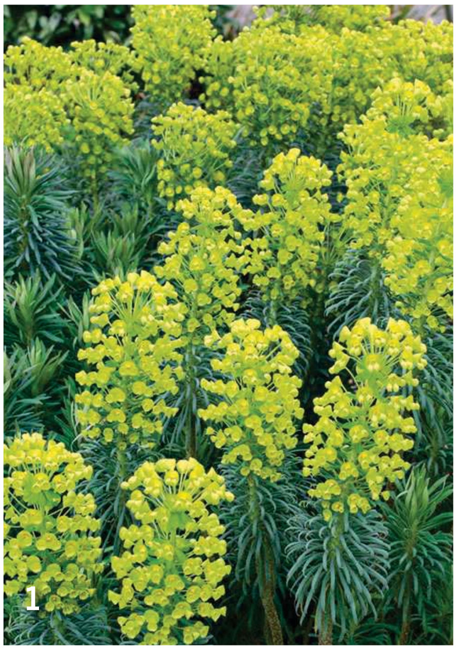
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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1 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, 2 GAP PHOTOS, 5 JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS, 6 & 7 JASON INGRAM.

The guest list

Not every gatecrasher to Richard Mabey's garden is unwelcome – some carry memories of summer holidays, some provide a link to the garden's past – although at least one has found itself on the Home Office's proscribed list

WORDS RICHARD MABEY ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

When I lived in the Chilterns, a mysterious rambler appeared among the old roses one spring. It had elegant pinnate leaves and very few spines and months passed before I nailed it as cut-leaved bramble, *Rubus laciniatus*. This is a teasing species for botanists of an historical inclination, because no one has the remotest idea about where or how it originated. I wondered how it had reached my garden until I remembered where I'd seen it before, growing on a heath behind a Suffolk cottage I'd lived in a few years previously. I'd made jam from the fruits, brought a jar back to the Chilterns, thrown the fermenting contents on to the compost heap, and the compost on to the roses. The bramble seeds had survived cooking and translocation and rot, and the comely bush that ensued became a small memorial to my own migrations and habits.

Our current Norfolk garden has more than 150 species that were not deliberately planted, a good few with comparable origin stories. After we'd returned from a holiday in Crete, an exquisite dwarf *Campanula*, endemic to the island, shot up in the herb bed. A couple of years later a nest of blue-flowered snakes uncoiled on the gravel, eventually revealing itself to be the Mediterranean annual, small-flowered viper's bugloss, *Echium parviflorum*, whose seed I guess we must have picked up on our boots hiking in Provence the previous summer, or brought home in a box of figs. As for the double-flowered, greater celandine, it seems to follow me wherever I go, after I pilfered a seedpod from a specimen in the Queen's Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Increasingly, I find that these incomers (I refuse to call them weeds) are far from happenstance; that we, as users and workers of the garden are generating them – cultivating them if you like – by our behaviour and personal affections. They reflect the people we are, our histories and hoardings, the walks and holidays we take.

> *"We carted home the statuesque skeleton of a giant hogweed and hung it with baubles. It looked strange and spectacular, a Yuletide triffid"*

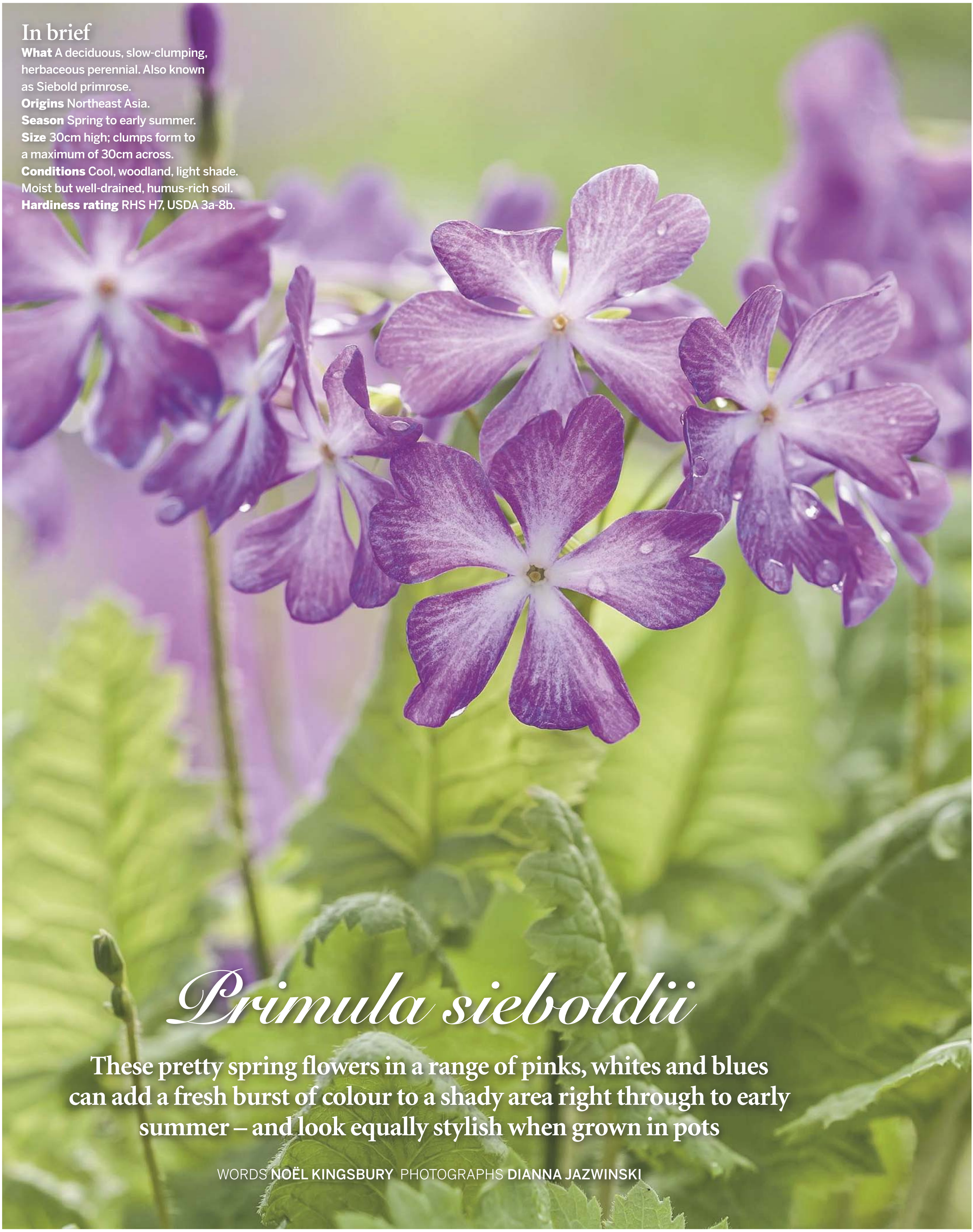
Some have deeper historical roots. Tansy, feverfew, evergreen alkanet (which crops up all over the garden – in the potato patch, the paths, and studding the white lace of cow parsley with cobalt buttons) were here when we arrived, and may be relics of old herb garden cultivation. The earliest map of the property I have been able to trace is from the early 19th century and shows a smallholding with rows of fruit trees at the front and a pond (still here) at the back. What is now our meadow was the corner of a large field labelled 'Hempland'. The two bachelors who lived here at the time were farming cannabis – except that this was a non-psychoactive variety used for making linen. The cloth from this stretch of the Waveney Valley was renowned and sent to Kensington Palace and the Russian Embassy. I thought it would be a nice tribute to grow a patch of the fibrous variety on the land it had occupied two centuries before, so applied to the Home Office for a licence to raise this proscribed herb. Their frosty reply made it clear that home-growing was precisely what legislation was intended to prevent.

In the end the lack of a licence proved irrelevant. One warm summer a single cannabis plant appeared of its own accord in the herbaceous border, its famously five-fingered leaves waving mischievously between the phlox and the clarkias. It grew to about three feet high, put out its dull-yellow flowers in autumn, and keeled over with the first frost. I'd like to think it was a long-dormant descendant of the crop our 19th-century smallholders grew for the London linen trade, but most likely it had sprung from bird seed, as had the millet nearby.

Many of the incomers, ancient and new, put on more vivid displays. Inside the walled garden, the beds are subject to just the kind of regular disturbance gatecrashers relish. Headlands and knots of self-sown poppies, fever few, marigold, datura edge the neat rectangles of vegetables, giving them the air of cubist paintings. They hang out there like popinjays, harmless, useless, but brilliantly and unpredictably decorative.

The most dramatic of our stowaways arrived via a Trojan Horse manoeuvre for which we were entirely responsible. We have a house custom at Christmas of using somewhat eccentric growths as our seasonal trees (a wilding apple branch complete with yellow apples was 2016's). A few years back we noticed the wonderfully statuesque skeleton of a giant hogweed in the corner of a neighbouring field, desiccated enough to be no danger as a source of skin irritation. We carted it home like a captured flag and hung it with baubles. It looked strange and spectacular, a Yuletide triffid. On Twelfth Night we took it to the bonfire and thought no more about it. The following summer the unmistakable basal leaves of a giant hogweed, vast and jagged, appeared in the gravel directly outside the front door. Trimmed of its venomous lower leaves for the sake of callers it eventually grew so tall that its white umbels, the size of cartwheels, bloomed dramatically just outside our bedroom window. A couple of years later the whole cycle was repeated by the back door.

Giant hogweed survives in our garden only as a stunted bonfire-site plant. But we have modelled a scrap-iron bird feeder in its honour – a story that belongs later in the year. □



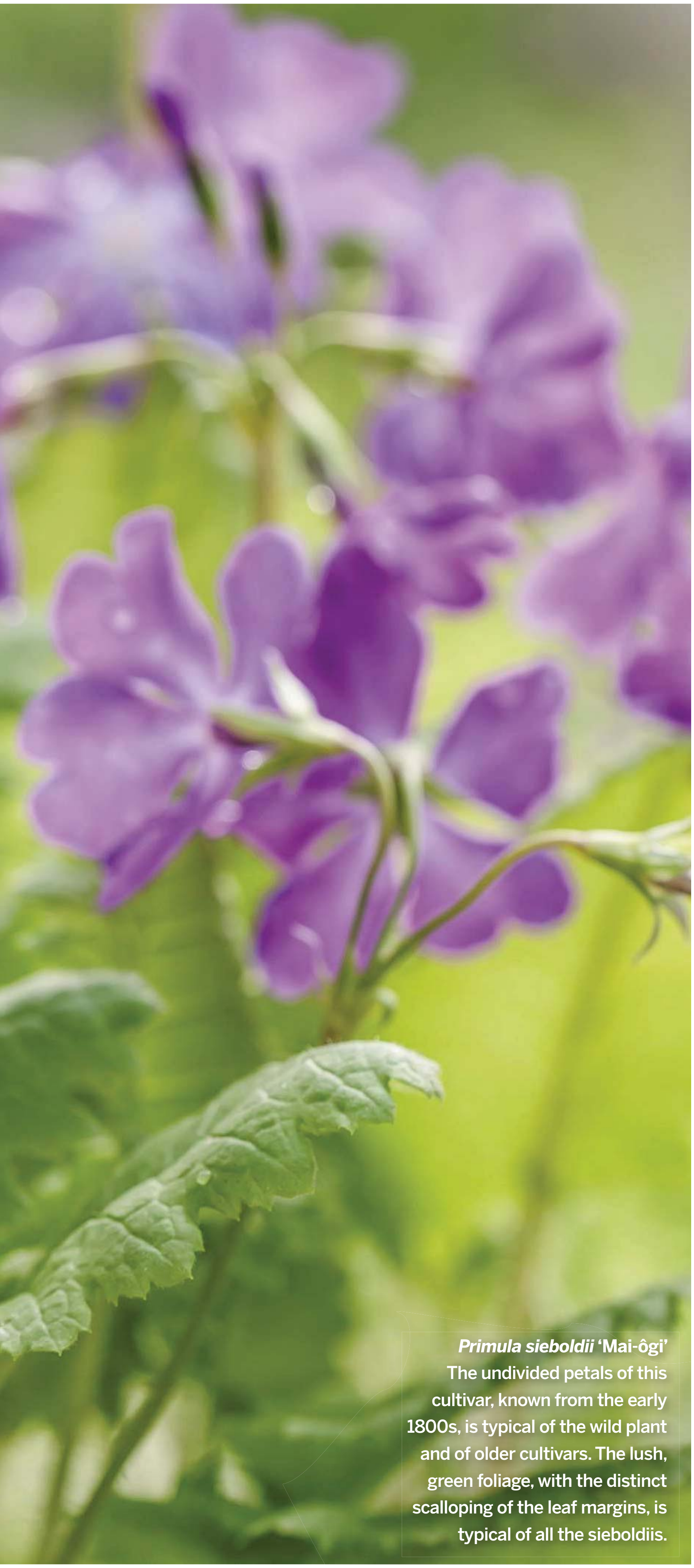
In brief

What A deciduous, slow-clumping, herbaceous perennial. Also known as Siebold primrose.
Origins Northeast Asia.
Season Spring to early summer.
Size 30cm high; clumps form to a maximum of 30cm across.
Conditions Cool, woodland, light shade. Moist but well-drained, humus-rich soil.
Hardiness rating RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Primula sieboldii

These pretty spring flowers in a range of pinks, whites and blues can add a fresh burst of colour to a shady area right through to early summer – and look equally stylish when grown in pots

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**



***Primula sieboldii* 'Mai-ôgi'** The undivided petals of this cultivar, known from the early 1800s, is typical of the wild plant and of older cultivars. The lush, green foliage, with the distinct scalloping of the leaf margins, is typical of all the sieboldiis.

Noël Kingsbury is a garden designer and writer whose garden on the Welsh borders reflects his passion for wild-style planting.

A bed planted up with *Primula sieboldii* – or perhaps even better, a collection of the plants in pots – is a remarkable sight. They appear in a range of colours, from white (and here we really do mean white, not cream or ivory) through to rich pinks and blue lilacs. The petal shapes are equally varied, from regular petals through to extravagantly divided ones. With many cultivars in flower at the same time, the effect can be magical; a hundred iterations of the same basic theme, dancing on the slightest breeze on the end of thin, tall stems.

Looking at individual plants, it is apparent that there is a huge level of variation, and this is very much part of their charm. However, it's the ones with divided petals – which look almost like snowflakes – that are most likely to catch your eye. Plant species that have flowers with divided petals are few and far between, so there is a real sense of the unusual here on top of their sheer beauty.

Primula is an enormous genus, with much botanical wrangling over classification. All are early and free flowering, starting into growth at low temperatures, which gives them a head start over neighbouring plants. All are from relatively unstable habitats, so produce plenty of seed to keep the species going, but rarely make reliably long-lived garden plants. This is reflected in their history. Over the years there have been fads for many different types of primula – auriculas, gold-laced polyanthus, double primroses – but then fashion moves on, and many cultivars are lost forever. *Primula sieboldii* is no different.

Named after the German doctor and botanist Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold (1796-1866), *P. sieboldii* is originally from northeast Asia, mainly northeast China, eastern Siberia and Korea as well as Japan. In Japan it is regarded as a rare and at-risk plant mainly because many of the riverbanks on which it prefers to grow have been concreted over, often unnecessarily. Luckily, cultivation has saved much of the plant's genetic ▷

All the *Primula sieboldii* featured here have the same height, spread and hardiness ratings, which are listed in the In Brief box left.

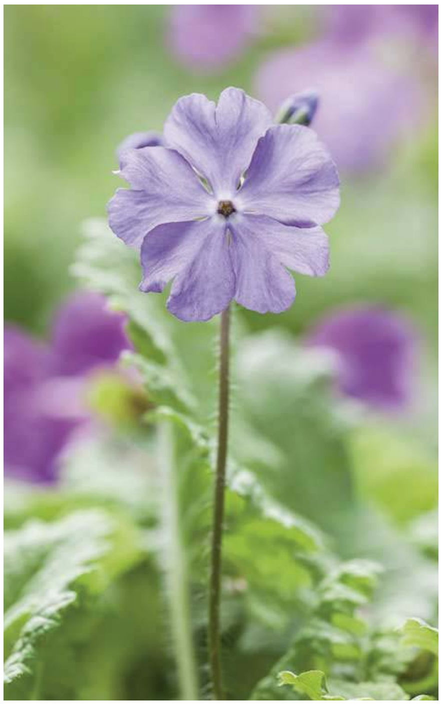
▷ diversity. In Japan it is known as *sakurasou*, as its flowers resemble cherry blossom (*sakura*) and both come into flower at around the same time.

In the two centuries before von Siebold introduced *P. sieboldii* to western growers, this humble wildflower had become a favourite with Japanese gardeners. The second Tokugawa Shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632), fell in love with them after spotting plants growing on the banks of rivers in the Edo region around what is now Tokyo, but fascination with the plant stretched far beyond a limited wealthy elite. Of all the plants brought into cultivation in Japan in the 17th century, *P. sieboldii* was perhaps most widely grown across all social classes. Possibly because the plants were small enough and easy enough for even the most humble grower to have a few pots, and because they were readily available and sold by street hawkers – although rare cultivars could command high prices from elite growers.

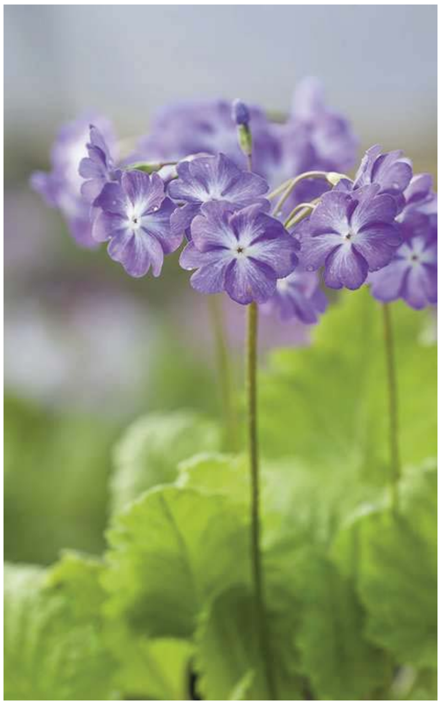
Their popularity reached a peak in the last two decades of the 18th century, when several associations were formed to organise *sakurasou* competitions. Special stands – remarkably similar to the auricula theatres found in northern England in the early 19th century – were constructed to display collections. As with many of the so-called Japanese 'cult' plants, they were described in beautifully illustrated books, and in these you can see flower patterns that are no longer known. In 1926 there were almost 600 cultivars, although their popularity has tended to ebb and flow in the years since. Today, only around 300 cultivars exist, and only around half of these are survivors from the early years.

In the past few years, however, *P. sieboldii* has been enjoying something of a renaissance. It is now firmly established in cultivation in both Europe and the USA, but it has yet to become common. One reason may be that to thrive long term these plants need very specific conditions. But for something so beautiful, with such a long flowering season – from mid-March to early June – and showing such a variety of colour and shape, that extra effort seems a small price. Be warned though, they are so extremely addictive you'll find it almost impossible to buy just one. □

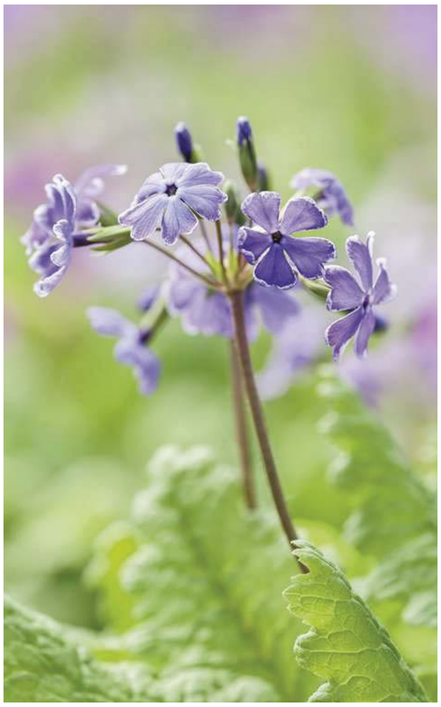
• Noël's recommendations for *Primula sieboldii* continue over the next six pages.



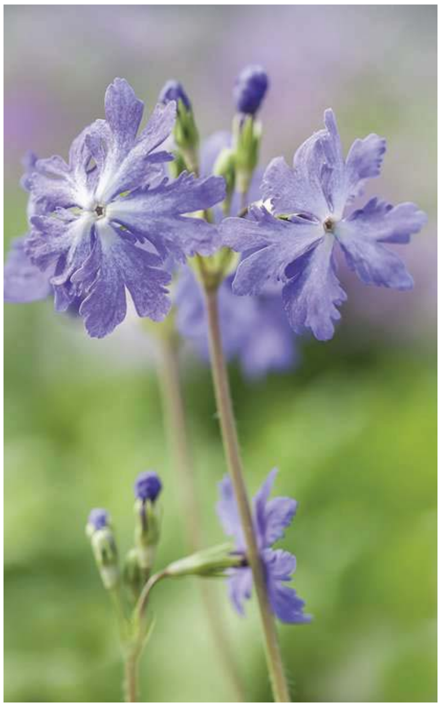
Primula sieboldii **'Seraphim'**
Originally bred by Alan Bloom at Bressingham Gardens in Norfolk, this cultivar has large flowers in soft mauve-blue.



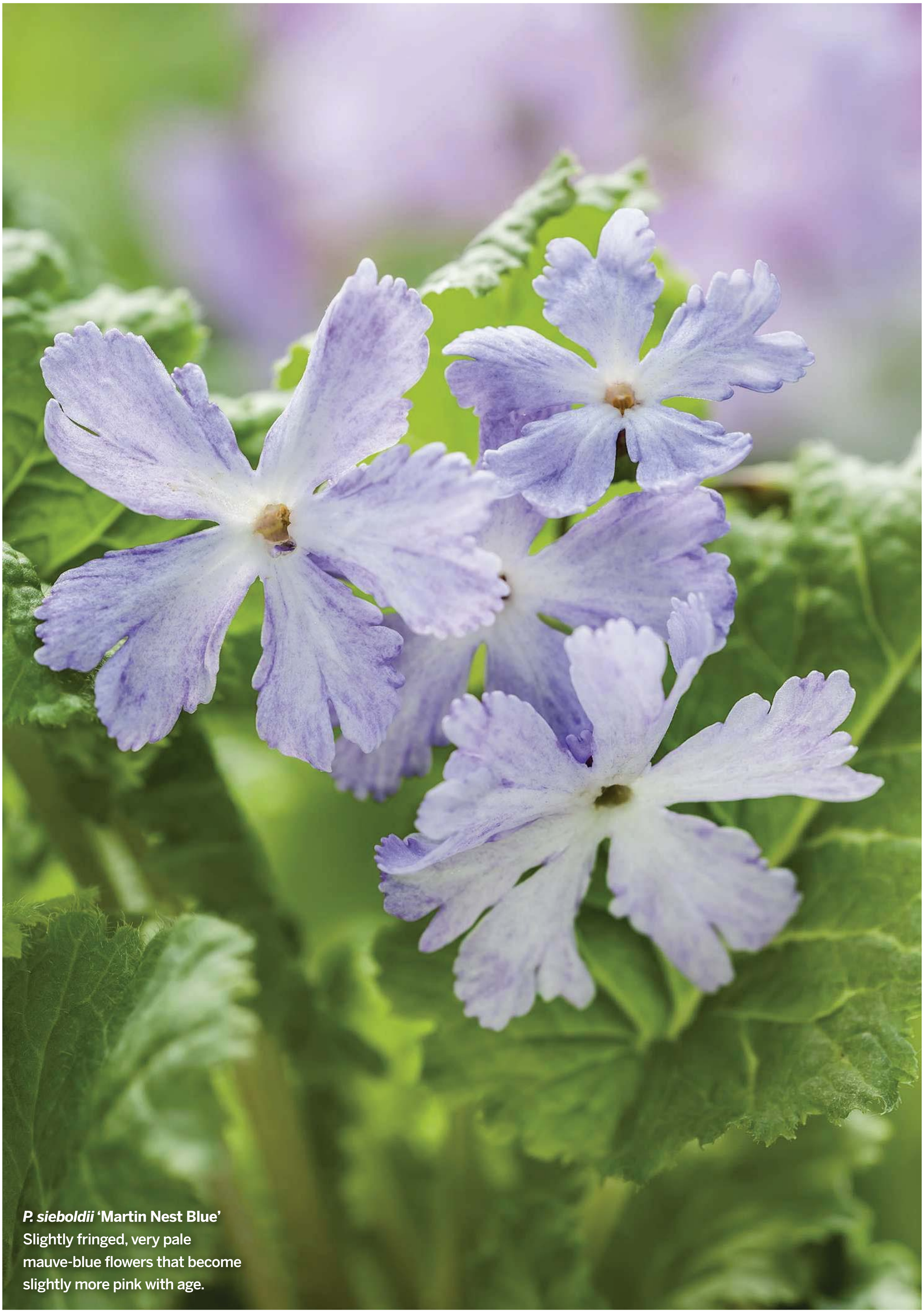
P. sieboldii **'Blue Lagoon'**
A pale-centred flower with rich, lavender-blue flowers and overlapping petals. Another cultivar bred by Alan Bloom at Bressingham.



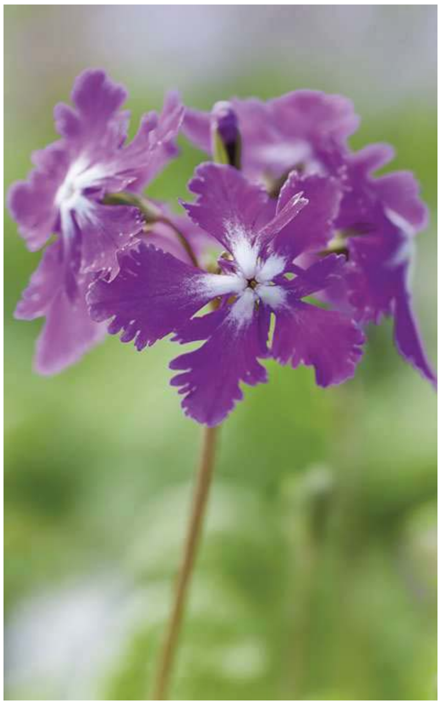
P. sieboldii **'Sumizomegenji'**
A vigorous grower with unusual colouring: a white edge and pale centre. The blue-mauve of the petals is also repeated in the throat.



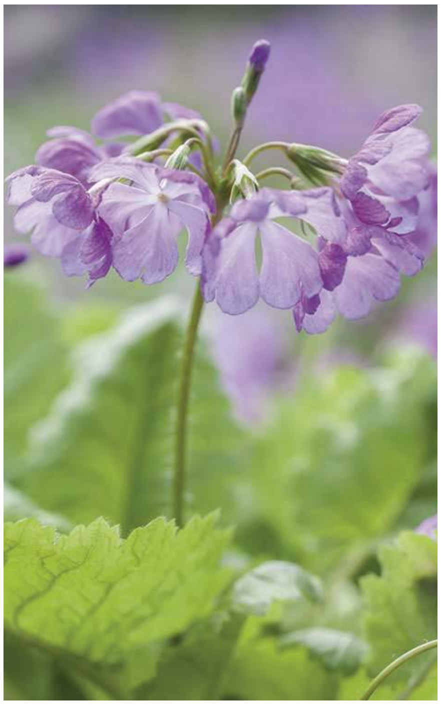
P. sieboldii **'Frilly Blue'**
Deeply divided petals give this cultivar a slightly unkempt look. However, its blue is as blue as you'll find among the sieboldiis.



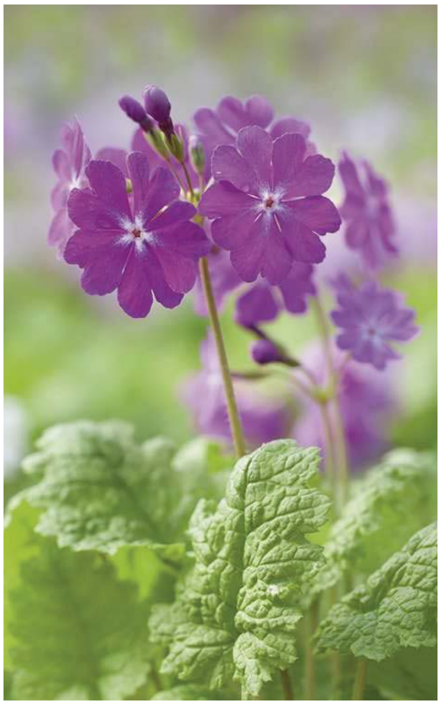
P. sieboldii **'Martin Nest Blue'**
Slightly fringed, very pale mauve-blue flowers that become slightly more pink with age.



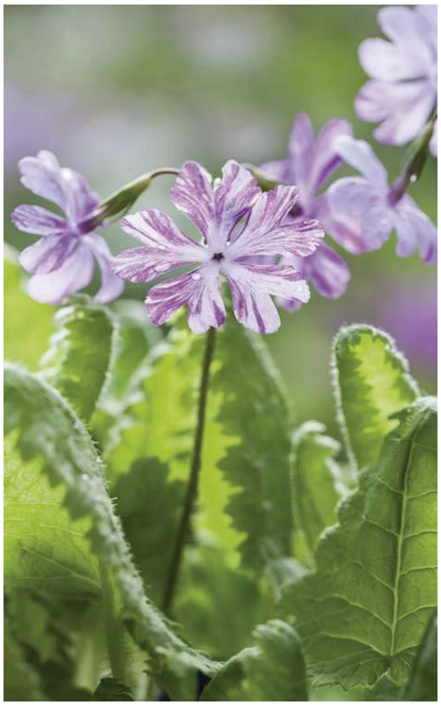
P. sieboldii **'Kokoroiki'**
Deep mauve-tone pink flowers with a striking star-shaped, white, central eye. Its name translates from Japanese as 'spirit'.



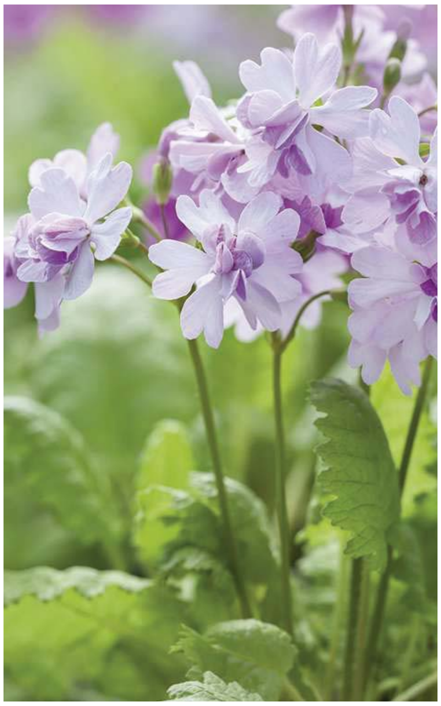
P. sieboldii **'Cherubim'**
A pretty cultivar with pale, mauve-pink flowers and undivided petals that resembles the ancestral form of the species.



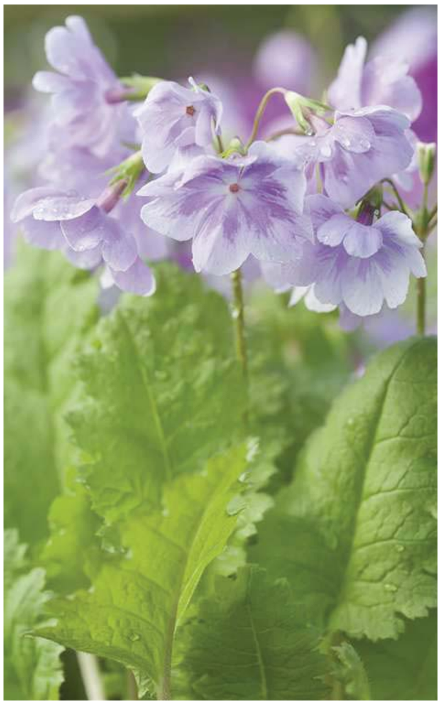
P. sieboldii **'Sekidaiko'**
With a rich, deep-pink colouring and petals that form a full, flat flower, this is one of the most formal and regular in appearance.



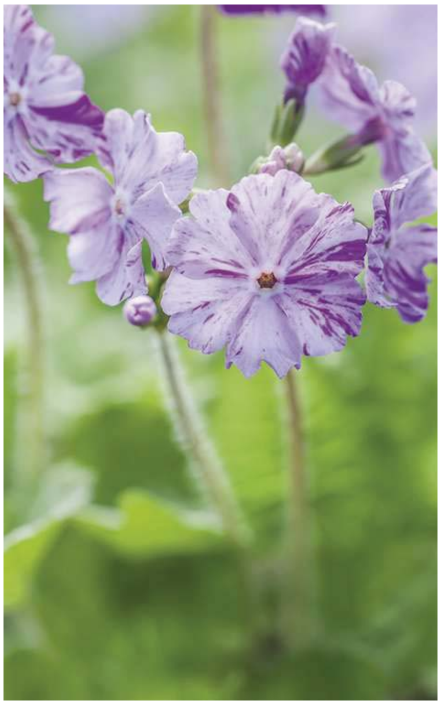
P. sieboldii **'Keepsakes'**
A pretty cultivar with unusual streaking on the petals. Such markings didn't appear on *P. sieboldii* until the late 18th century.



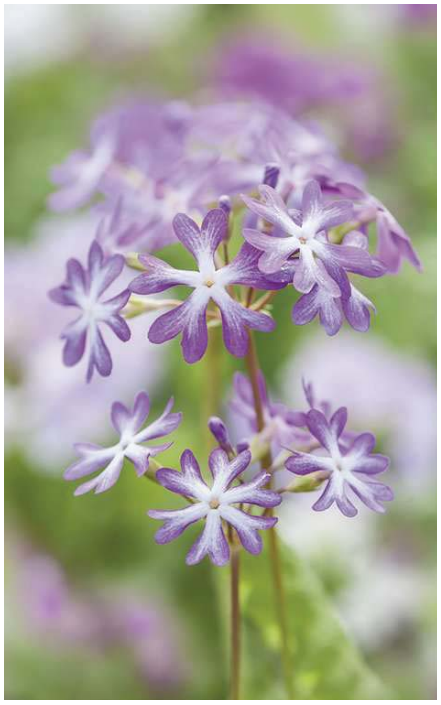
P. sieboldii **'Iso-botan'**
This semi-double cultivar is a recent arrival from Japan. It has pale streaking on pink flowers and partially bifurcated petals.



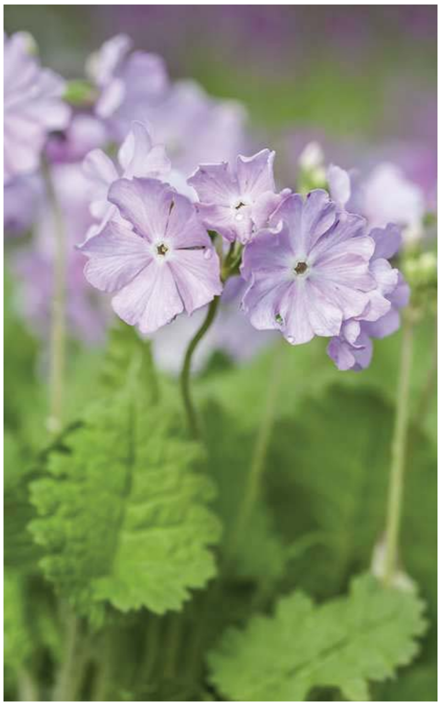
P. sieboldii **'Hana-monyo'**
This delicate cultivar is a pale, mauve pink with a deeper tone seeping out of the centre. Its name translates as 'blossom'.



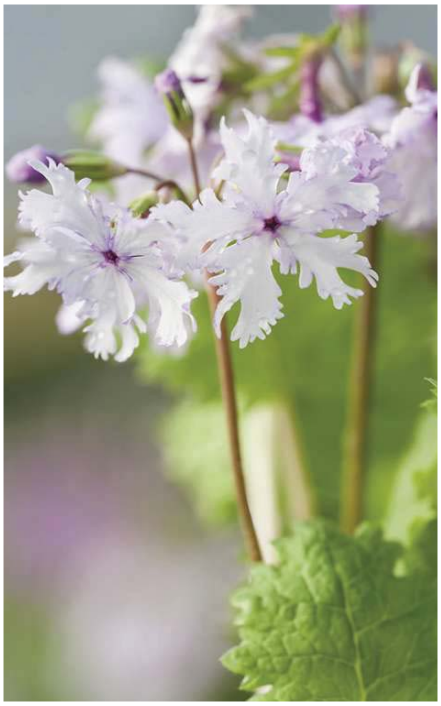
P. sieboldii **'Daiminnishiki'**
Although this cultivar's flowers are normally distinctly streaked, it will occasionally produce shoots with plain pink flowers.



P. sieboldii **'Noboruko'**
An exceptionally elegant cultivar that has some of the narrowest petals of all. It's a flower shape that's very popular in Japan.



P. sieboldii **'Martin Nest Pale Pink'**
The solid, undivided petals of this cultivar, which was bred at the Martin Nest nursery in Lincolnshire, give its flowers real impact.



P. sieboldii **'Kashima'**
This deeply fringed, pink-centred, white cultivar, dates back to the mid 19th century – an especially fertile time for primula breeding.

Cultivation

- The name primula comes from the Latin *primus* meaning first, and like most primulas, *Primula sieboldii* gets off to an early start. Growth, in southern England at least, begins in February when pale-green leaves begin to emerge from shallow-buried rhizomes, known as crowns. They can begin flowering as early as mid March and continue until May or even early June. The flowers have long enough stems for picking and may last two weeks in a vase.

- Many primulas grow in spring and then become semi-dormant during the drier summer months. This species, however, comes from a monsoon climate zone, where most rainfall is in the summer months – so it will not survive drought well.

- Plants in containers will benefit from feeding in spring and early summer, and should ideally be re-potted annually in mid autumn during their dormant phase. Foliage dies back in October.

- In common with all other primulas, *Primula sieboldii* need a cool root run in moist but well-drained soil and don't like to be in direct sunlight, preferring light shade. In the wild they grow in woodlands and along the banks of rivers, so they particularly appreciate soil that has a high humus content.

- Like many other primulas – including the more familiar polyanthus and primroses – *Primula sieboldii* clumps grow outwards every year. The older central stems die back, which means they continually have to occupy new territory; if they fail to root at the outer edge they will die. In the wild, clumps will expand but then almost certainly decline as the soil conditions change – which is where their prolific seed production comes in to play.

- Over time the rhizomes will wander, so plants will 'move', sometimes away from their labels. If circumstances are favourable large clumps can build up; if less so, growth will be patchy and plants will die out.

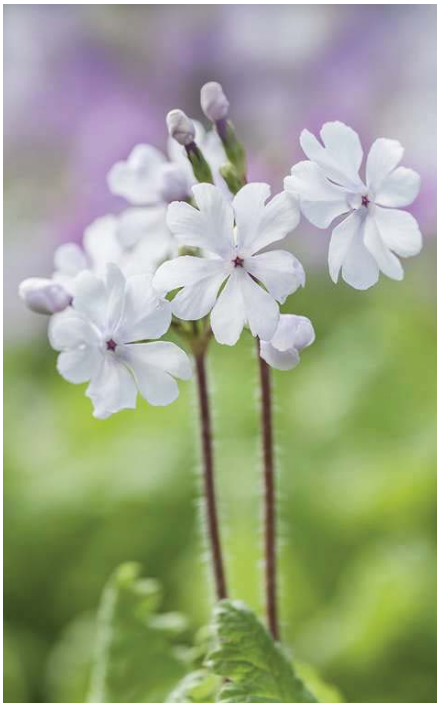
- If necessary, you can divide clumps in autumn simply by separating the living parts of the rhizome – any piece with a shoot and some roots should grow. Container-grown plants will need dividing regularly as there is a tendency for them to wander to the edge of the pot.

- Although propagation by seed can be extremely effective, there is no guarantee that the seed will come true. Ideally, it should be sown fresh, or as soon as possible in the autumn. Germination is usually very good and will occur in early spring, although it may be erratic.

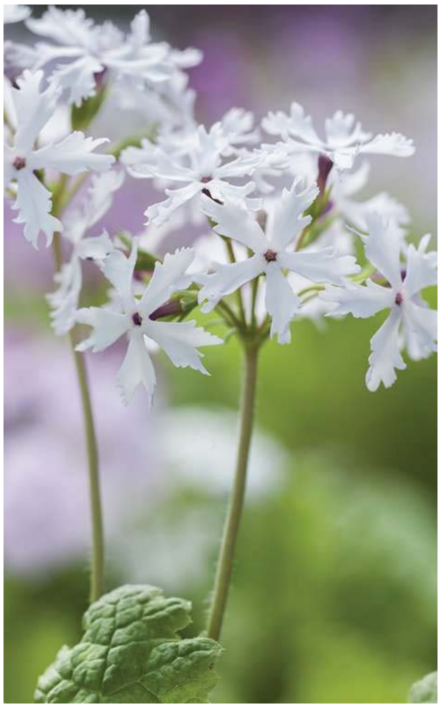
- Vine weevil, which can affect many woodland plants with rhizomes, can be a problem. Insecticides and biological controls are available, although you can also trap the adult weevils under upturned citrus skins.

Where to buy

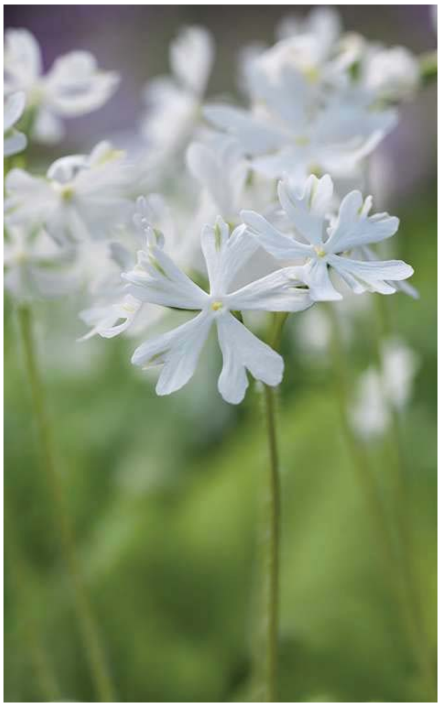
- **Barnhaven Primulas**
  11 Rue du Pont Blanc, 22310, Plestin Les Grèves, France.
  Tel +33 (0)2 96 35 68 41,
  barnhaven.com
  A French nursery with a good range of Japanese hybrids and some of its own.
- **Edrom Nurseries**
  Coldingham, Eyemouth,
  Berwickshire TD14 5TZ.
  Tel 01890 771386,
  edrom-nurseries.co.uk
- **Farmyard Nurseries**
  Dol Llan Road, Llandysul,
  Carmarthenshire SA44 4RL.
  Tel 01559 363389,
  farmyardnurseries.co.uk
- **Penny's Primulas**
  pennysprimulas.co.uk
  Mail order only. Holds the National Collection of *Primula sieboldii* and probably offers the widest selection in the UK.



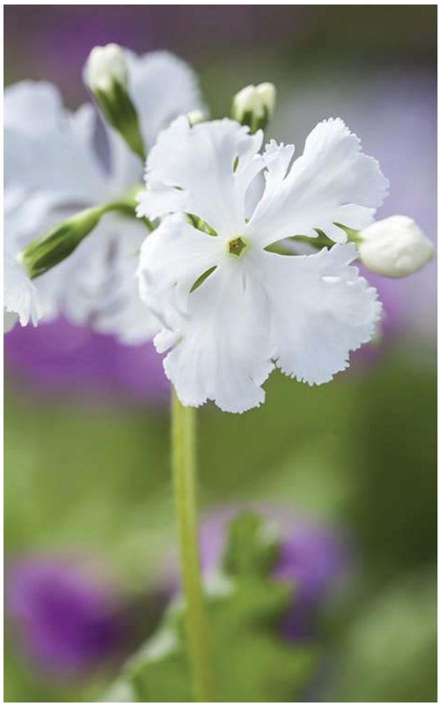
***P. sieboldii* 'Usujanome'**
A delicate, white cultivar known to have originated in the early 1800s, in the Saitama region of Japan, north of Tokyo.



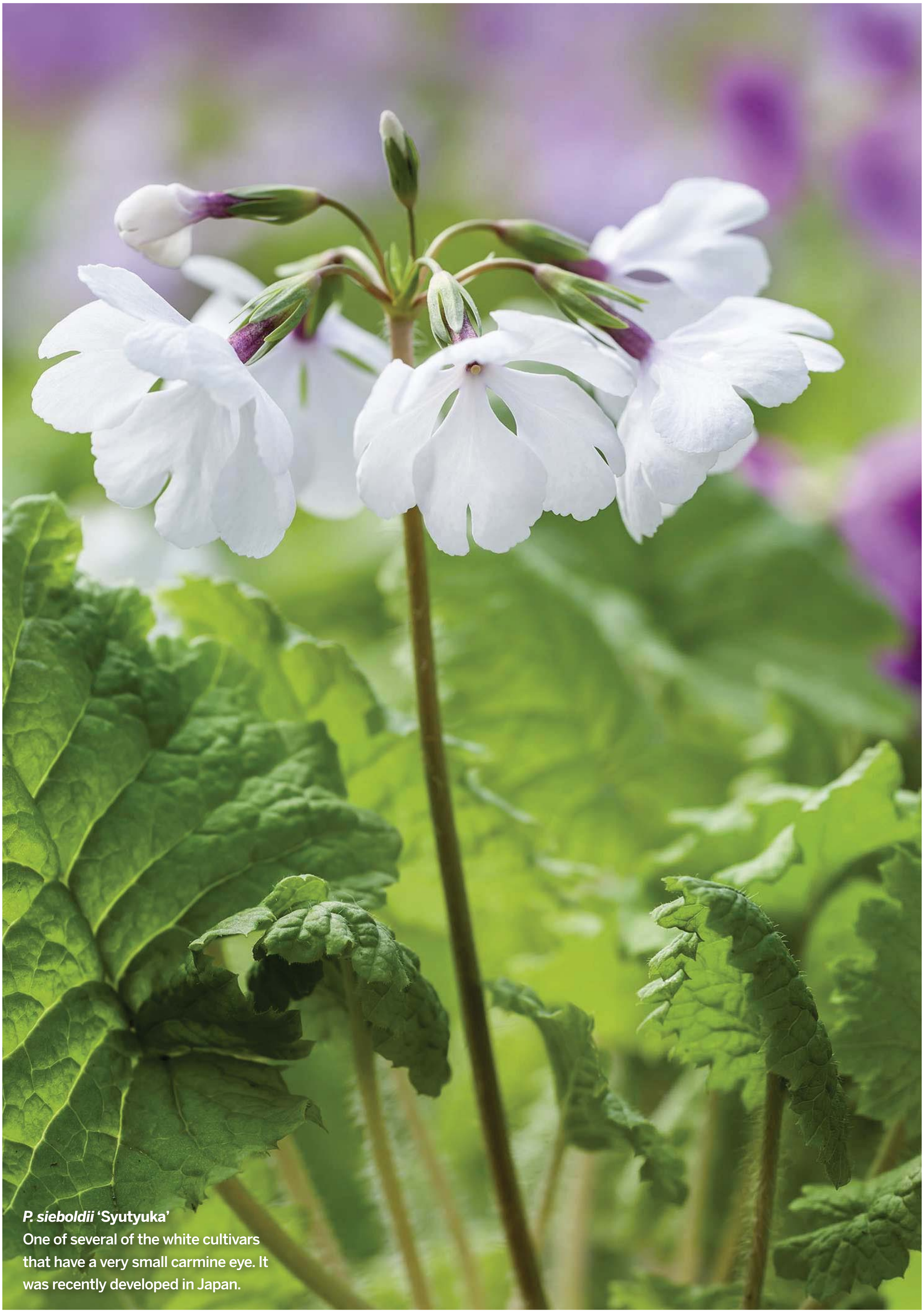
***P. sieboldii* 'Shiro-tonbo'**
Of all the white cultivars this is one that truly deserves the sobriquet snowflake. Its long stems make it especially good for cutting.



***P. sieboldii* 'Aoba-no-fue'**
A cultivar bred in the Japanese province of Saitama in the 1700s. One of the oldest cultivars in cultivation in the west.



***P. sieboldii* 'Snowflake'**
Rather chunky for a snowflake perhaps, but this cultivar's wide, undivided petals emphasise the purity of its whiteness.



***P. sieboldii* 'Syutyuka'**
One of several of the white cultivars that have a very small carmine eye. It was recently developed in Japan.

MANY THANKS TO PENNY'S PRIMULAS IN DEVON WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

MANY THANKS TO BARLEY WOOD WALLED GARDEN, SOMERSET (WALLEDGARDEN.CO.UK), WHERE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN, AND TO THE HONEY CAFE, BRONLLYS (HONEYCAFE.CO.UK) FOR RECIPE ADVICE.

Taste of spring

Blossom-inspired dishes to put you in the pink

WORDS AND RECIPES ALYS HURN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Each year, thousands of people flock to see Japan's cherry blossom trees bloom. They trace the blossom's journey from the island of Okinawa in the south to Hokkaido in the north, guided by daily blossom forecasts known as the cherry blossom front. The event is called *hanami* and across the country, from late January to the end of May, family and friends gather to eat and drink under the trees and celebrate the ephemeral beauty of the cherry blossom.

In Britain, we too have an abundance of fruit trees that flower in spring and these are a welcome sign after winter that warmer weather is on its way. *Gardens Illustrated* has come up with a selection of recipes to inspire readers to celebrate the arrival of British blossom, with savoury and sweet treats that not only emulate the colours and form of the blossom itself, but also herald the arrival of spring and a promise of an abundance of growth in the garden.

Turn the page for six *hanami*-inspired recipes.

Spinach and feta frittata

MAKES 12 MINI FRITTATA

- **300g (approx) baby spinach**
- **100g feta cheese**
- **5 eggs**
- **Black pepper and salt**
- **Splash of milk**

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Wilt the spinach in a frying pan with a little water on a medium heat. Once cooked, squeeze out any excess water and share out between greased fairy cake tins. Add a few cubes of feta to the spinach. In a jug, mix eggs and milk and season well with salt and black pepper. Add the egg mixture to each fairy cake tin, but don't fill to the top. Bake in the oven for ten minutes or so, or until the egg has cooked and a golden top has formed. Run a knife around the edge of each frittata and turn out on to a wire rack to cool.

Roasted beetroot hummus

- **1 tin (400g) chickpeas**
- **4 medium-sized, uncooked beetroots**
- **2tsp ground cumin**
- **2 garlic cloves**
- **Juice of ½ lemon**
- **Olive oil**
- **Black pepper and salt**

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Clean and trim the beetroot, keeping the skin on. Cut into wedges and put on to a baking tray. Toss the wedges in olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for around 30 minutes until cooked all the way through. Leave to cool. Open and drain the chickpeas. Pour the chickpeas into a food processor along with the cooked beetroot, lemon juice, garlic, cumin and olive oil. Blend well. If the mixture is very thick, add more olive oil. Mix well until the contents form a fairly thick paste. Serve with crusty wholemeal bread.

Where to see blossom

Brogdale, home to the National Fruit Collection, has the largest collection of fruit trees in the world. Throughout April it hosts a *hanami* festival encouraging visitors to picnic under the cherry blossom. Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ. Tel 01795 536250, brogdalecollections.org

More cherry blossom in the walled garden at **Beningbrough Hall, Gallery and Gardens** in Yorkshire, where so much blossom falls the lawns seem to be covered in pink confetti, reminiscent of parks in Japan. Beningbrough, York, North Yorkshire YO30 1DD. Tel 01904 472027, nationaltrust.org.uk

Head to **Yeo Valley Organic Garden** in Somerset, and enjoy the blooming *Malus hupehensis* and *Malus* x *robusta* 'Red Sentinel' that line the Tea Crab Avenue. Yeo Valley Organic Garden, Holt Farm, Bath Road, Blagdon, North Somerset BS40 7SQ. Tel 01761 461650, theorganicgardens.co.uk

Spring salad

For the salad

- 8 asparagus spears
- 10 green beans
- 3 radishes
- 5-6 new potatoes
- 1 'Little Gem' lettuce
- Large handful of garden peas
- Large handful of mustard leaves or wild rocket

For the dressing

- 1 garlic clove
- 1tsp grainy mustard
- 3tbsp olive oil
- 1tbsp cider vinegar
- Squeeze of lemon juice

First, make the dressing. Peel and crush the garlic clove and put into a jar. Add the other ingredients, mix well and set aside.

Next, cut the new potatoes in half and add to slightly salted, boiling water. In another pan, blanch the beans and asparagus for no more than two minutes. Once cooked, drain and immediately rinse the vegetables in cold or iced water to stop them cooking. This will help keep their bright-green colour.

Cut the radishes into very thin, round slices. Once the potatoes are cooked through, drain and leave to cool. When cold, mix them with the asparagus, beans and peas, and season with black pepper.

Now assemble the salad in a large dish. Start with the largest lettuce leaves at the bottom, and then add the potato and vegetable mix. Top with radish slices and mustard leaves. Finish by drizzling the mustard dressing on top.

Apple pie rosettes

MAKES 12 ROSETTES

- **225g self-raising flour**
- **112g butter**
- **55g sugar**
- **140ml milk**
- **6 medium-sized red apples (Pink Lady or 'Discovery' work well)**
- **½tbsp runny honey**
- **1tsp cinnamon**
- **50g melted butter**

Bake as individual treats or use to top your favourite pie filling, as shown here. First, the pastry. Sift the flour into a bowl and add the butter. Rub together until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add sugar and mix again. Then slowly add the milk, bringing the mixture together to form a dough. Roll into a ball, wrap in cling film and put into the fridge.

Next, prepare the apples. Core and cut each apple into quarters. Then cut the quarters into thin slices, no bigger than 25mm thick, and place into a microwaveable bowl. Add the butter, honey and cinnamon, and mix to coat the slices. Place the bowl in the microwave and heat for 20 seconds. This should soften the apples enough to be pliable, but not to break.

Take the pastry from the fridge, roll out and cut into 3cm-wide strips about 25cm long. Take one strip and place apple slices along it, straight side down, with each slice overlapping the next. Use roughly eight slices to one strip of pastry. Then fold up the bottom side of the pastry strip to cover the base of the apples. Carefully begin to roll the pastry from one end to the other but don't roll too tightly as this might break the apple.

Repeat until you have used all your pastry strips. Bake at 160°C for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with icing sugar to serve.

Scones with spiced rhubarb jam

MAKES 10 SCONES

For the scones

- **225g self-raising flour**
- **125g softened butter**
- **110g sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **300ml milk**

For the spiced rhubarb jam

- **400g rhubarb**
- **2 star anise**
- **400g sugar**
- **Thumb-sized piece of ginger, grated**
- **Rind of 1 lemon**
- **Juice of ½ lemon**

To make the scones, preheat the oven to 180ºC. Mix the butter and flour together in a bowl until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and mix again. Whisk the egg and milk together in a jug. Add this gradually to the dry mixture, stirring all the time until a soft, doughy ball forms. It should be moist to the touch, but not too sticky. Tip the dough out on to a lightly floured surface, flatten gently with your hands so it is roughly 5cm thick. Cut the scones out with a scone cutter. Using your hands, quickly shape each scone, turning and moulding them gently so they gain a little height. Place on a greased baking tray and glaze each one with a little egg wash. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes.

To make the jam, first sterilise two jam jars. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Trim and cut the rhubarb into chunks. Place the rhubarb, star anise, grated ginger, lemon rind and juice into an ovenproof dish. Add a little water and cover with foil. Cook for around 15 minutes until the rhubarb is just soft. Pour the rhubarb mixture into a pan and add the sugar. Using a jam thermometer, boil the mixture until it reaches the setting point for jam (105ºC), then take off the heat. Using a ladle, carefully pour the hot jam mixture into the sterilised jars and seal. Serve with plenty of clotted or whipped cream.

Raspberry and white chocolate macaroons

MAKES 20 MACAROONS

For the macaroons

- **100g ground almonds**
- **100g icing sugar**
- **100g caster sugar**
- **4 egg whites**
- **1½tbsp water**
- **Pink food colouring**
- **A few drops of raspberry essence**

For the white chocolate filling

- **110g good-quality white chocolate**
- **55g butter**
- **3tbsp milk**
- **170g icing sugar**

First make the white chocolate filling. Melt the white chocolate and butter in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Stir occasionally. Once melted, add icing sugar and milk to form a smooth paste. Leave to cool. Next, make the macaroons. Preheat the oven to 150°C and line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Sieve the icing sugar and ground almonds into a large bowl and mix. Add two egg whites, essence and colouring and mix to form a thick paste. Heat sugar and water gently in a pan until the sugar dissolves and then boil until you have a shiny, clear syrup. In a separate bowl whisk the remaining egg whites until they form soft peaks. Add the sugar syrup gradually until the whites are thick and glossy. Gently fold into the almond and icing sugar mix. Fill a piping bag with the mix and carefully pipe 40 small blobs on to the pre-prepared baking tray. Bear in mind that each blob is one half of a macaroon, so don't be tempted to make them too big. Gently tap the baking sheet a few times to remove any air bubbles from the mixture. Leave to dry for 20 minutes or until a smooth, shiny skin forms. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes with the oven door slightly open. Slide on to a wire rack to cool. Once cool, pipe a layer of white chocolate filling on to the rougher side of one macaroon half. Then top with another half. Repeat until you have a full set of macaroons. ☐

Jennifer Trehane

Having run both the UK's leading camellia nursery and Britain's first commercial blueberry farm, this indefatigable enquirer is still travelling the world, seeking to learn yet more

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Her eyes sparkling, whooping with laughter, Jennifer Trehane recalls her last visit, in 2015, to Oshima Island, known as Camellia Island to its neighbours in Japan. Three million *Camellia japonica* grow wild on the mountainside, their seeds gathered each year and pressed to make fine oils. The children at the local high school are trained in camellia culture and can identify every tree in the school's extensive collection. There are camellia dances, camellia chopstick holders; dishes are garnished with radishes carved into camellia blooms. Invited in her capacity as a director of the International Camellia Society, Jennifer was surprised to land to the sound of chanting: *Jen-ni-fer… Jen-ni-fer…* "I was treated like a pop star," giggles Jennifer, still tickled pink by the flag-waving crowds. On Camellia Island, the editor of the *International Camellia Journal*, author of the standard work on the genus and joint founder of the International Camellia Society Gardens of Excellence scheme is a far more important visitor than any president or pope.

Jennifer did not always love the flower. "It was just a job," she says, matter-of-factly. And one that arose entirely by accident. In 1947 Jennifer's father spotted a curious advertisement: 100 blueberry plants from the deliciously named Lulu Island (near Vancouver) offered free to any British grower as a gesture of post-war solidarity. Eighty-seven bushes duly arrived, and prospered in the sandy Dorset soil of her father's garden. Ten years on, David Trehane, now convinced that blueberries could have a commercial future, ordered 1,000 from the USA. They arrived scorched almost to death. Undaunted, he decided that they would just have to propagate their own and despatched his daughter to survey a suitable site.

"It was just a marshy wood," she recalls, "full of fallen trees and moor grass." But the thin, damp, acidic soil was perfect for blueberries. It fell to 21-year-old Jennifer, newly graduated with a horticulture degree from Reading University, to set up the nursery site, building frames and installing water, heating cables and among the earliest mist propagators. But with the best will in the world, their modest stock of cuttings could not fill the capacious frames, so they added random cuttings from the garden – a few magnolias and azaleas, a handful of heathers, and four different camellias.

Jennifer was eager to carry on building up the new nursery, but her father had other ideas. As a girl (the oldest of six siblings), it was her 'job' to marry and have children. Her younger brother, Jeremy, would take charge when he was old enough. "In those days you didn't argue with your parents," sighs Jennifer. She duly married, went to live in the Lake District, and raised three children. But by the early 1980s, the marriage was over, and Jennifer was looking to move south and get back into horticulture. Now, to her astonishment, her father invited her to return home and take over the nursery.

Much had happened in the interim. Always interested in ericaceous shrubs, David Trehane had become fascinated by the camellias. He had become one of the founder members of the International Camellia Society, and through his contacts with breeders and collectors worldwide, had established his nursery as the go-to place for anyone interested in the genus. Yet by 1982 it was struggling. With minimal commercial experience (she had run a small pony-trekking business in the Lakes) and no specialist knowledge of her product, Jennifer was somehow required to turn the nursery round. She managed. "You either sink or swim in your life," she declares. She learned from her father, her staff and her customers, and ran the nursery successfully for the next 13 years.

In 1991 Jennifer set off for Ireland to deliver a batch of camellias to a notable collector. In his garden she found a coachload of aficionados from the International Camellia Society, and before long she had joined their tour. It was to be the first of many, introducing her to camellias, both cultivated and wild, in many countries. She travelled to New Zealand and South Africa, joined plant-hunting expeditions in China and visited breeders in Australia and the USA. "The lure is curiosity," she says. "I learned so much about cultivation by seeing wild camellias – how durable they are – one surviving in heavy shade and another in dry and exposed conditions. It's not their beauty that interests me. Rather, I wonder why this one is different from that one. Where does it come from? If it's a cultivar, who bred it? Travelling to find out, I meet all these wonderful people."

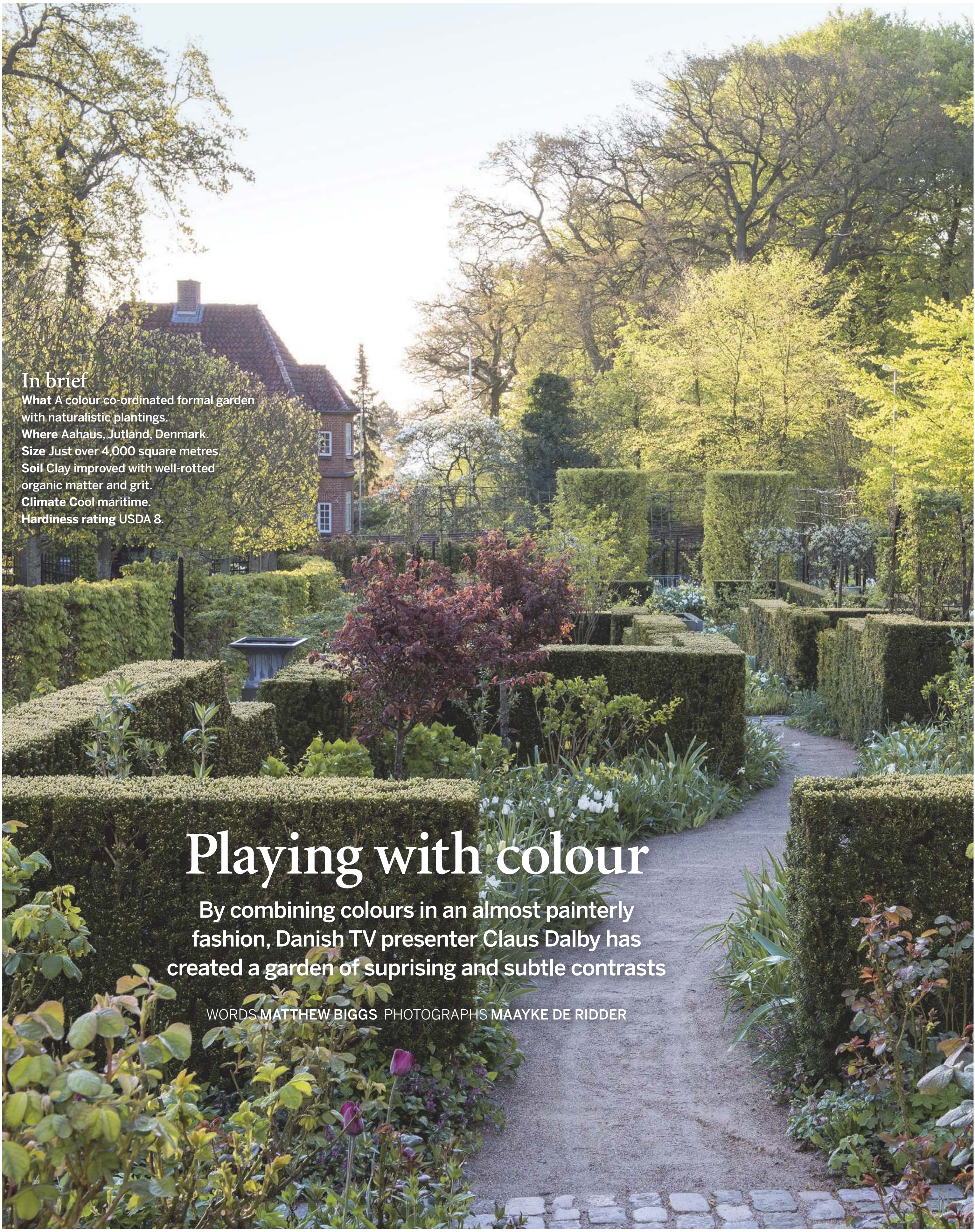
Now in her 80th year, Jennifer continues to travel and learn, advising on camellias all over the world. She is also an expert on blueberries. And with her customary gusto, she has thrown herself into a brand-new project – writing her autobiography. There are those who creep timidly through life and those who hurl themselves at it full tilt, squeezing every ounce of adventure out of it. Jennifer Trehane is one of the latter, and her story will make a cracking read. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Trehane Nursery, Stapehill Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND.
Tel 01202 873490, trehanenursery.co.uk

NEXT MONTH Garden designer Ann-Marie Powell.

"The lure is curiosity. It's not their beauty that interests me. Rather, I wonder why this camellia is different from that one. Where does it come from? Who bred it?"



Playing with colour

By combining colours in an almost painterly fashion, Danish TV presenter Claus Dalby has created a garden of suprising and subtle contrasts

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

In brief

What A colour co-ordinated formal garden with naturalistic plantings.
Where Aahaus, Jutland, Denmark.
Size Just over 4,000 square metres.
Soil Clay improved with well-rotted organic matter and grit.
Climate Cool maritime.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

As you wander trough the 15 different rooms in Claus Dalby's garden you notice subtle changes as one dominant colour makes way for another.

"I love colour," states Claus Dalby emphatically. Anyone who has seen any of the gardening programmes he presents for Danish TV or read his books and blog (described by the German technology company Bosch as 'the most influential gardening blog in Europe') would wholeheartedly agree. Claus is a man of many parts – sometime magician, successful publisher and instinctive man of style – who stumbled into gardening and 'painting with plants' in a moment of serendipity.

"Some friends insisted that I met a flower painter, who was incredibly creative with paints and plants, because they thought we might have something in common," says Claus. The painter was the late Anne Just who lived and gardened in the north of Jutland and Claus's meeting with her changed his life. "I saw the beauty, style and art in her garden and was instantly smitten," he says. "From that moment, I knew exactly what I wanted to do." United by their love of gardening, the two soon became great friends. "I learned so much from Anne and her influence is still here; I feel as though I have taken over her mantle."

They started travelling around Europe, three or four times a year, visiting gardens that became a source of inspiration for Claus. "It was like the first time I went to Italy and ate the most delicious lasagne," he says. "I never knew it could taste so good. I also hadn't realised just how beautiful gardens could be." On one trip to the UK, visits to Hadspen in Somerset when Nori and Sandra Pope were artists in residence, Sticky Wicket in Dorset and Bosvigo Gardens in Truro, where Wendy Perry makes vibrant use of colour, emboldened Claus to indulge in his own love of colour.

The following season Claus began working on his own garden, starting with a border in front of his classically styled house. "There was a long lawn sloping down to the wrought ▷

Painting with plants

"Creating a garden is a combination of intuition and experience," says Claus. "The theory is quite straightforward. It is a matter of choosing a colour scheme from ground level upwards with shrubs, trees or evergreens, perhaps in the form of topiary, providing punctuation points. The painting is created by repeating simple patterns and packing the borders with plants. Structures, such as classical buildings that provide points of interest and character, are simply the framework so they should not dominate a garden, while foliage, flowers and stems deliver the finer details. Nothing should detract from the plants. A garden is better once it has aged with the softening patina of rusting iron and lichens. I know every square centimetre of the garden and how it works. There should be a balance, everything in proportion and harmony as they would in nature."

▷ iron railings at the boundary, but now I wanted more," he says. "When I do something I always ask advice from people who are more experienced and talented than myself, because everything must be the best." Claus employed landscaper Jane Schul and instructed her to create a garden with no lawns but rooms, which he would then fill with plants. "I wanted each one decorated in a different way, yet with a unity of basic design. The house had to link to the garden, too."

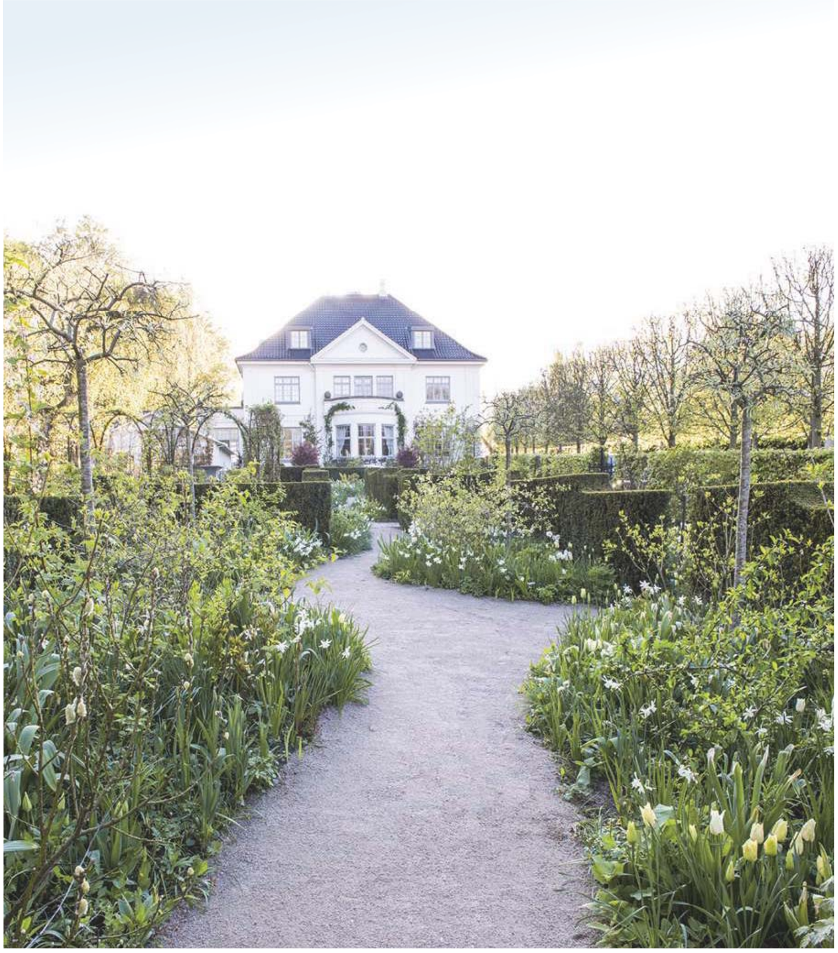
There are now 15 garden rooms, divided by precisely clipped yew hedging, with vistas down and across the garden, revealing views to classical buildings and statuary, increasing the sense of space. "The structure is formal but the planting informal, I am a maximalist, not a minimalist. I love to fill the garden with plants, there should be something to please wherever you look, from ground level upwards; visitors should feel part of the garden."

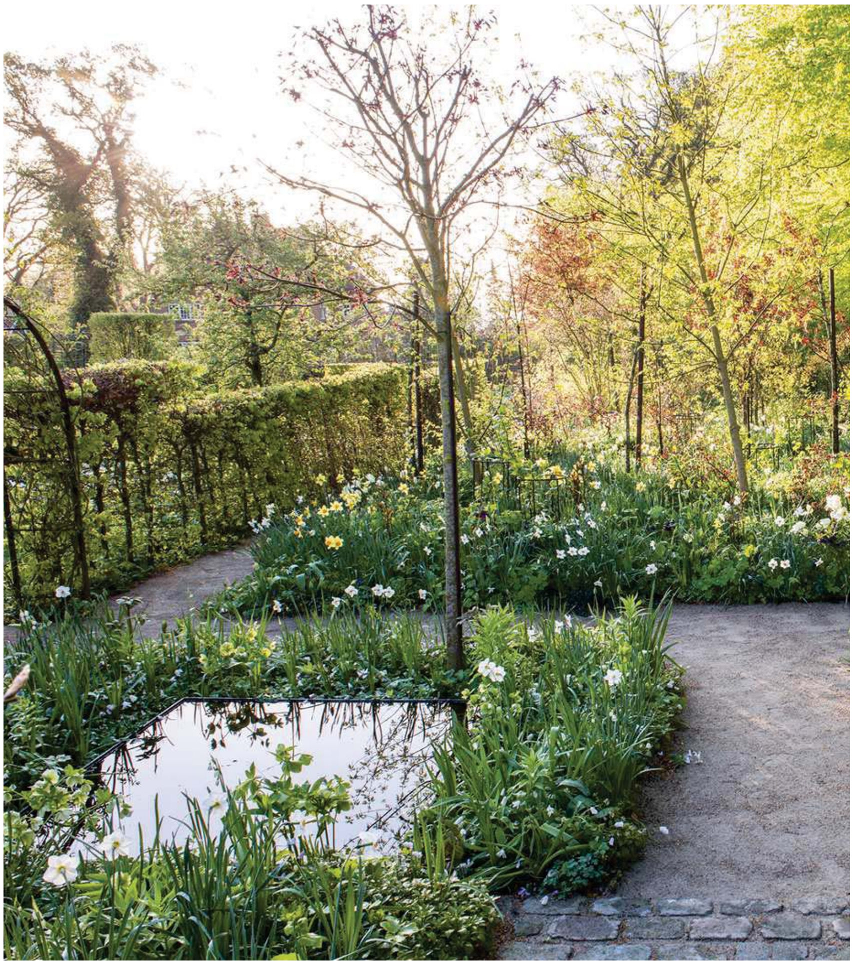
In early spring, the planting scheme is a combination of emerging leaves of perennials – peonies, ferns, hellebores and hostas and early flowers. "I want to make my plantings accessible to everyone, so lots of the plants will be familiar but not the planting combinations," he explains. Claus fully understands the contribution of foliage to the garden and is always telling visitors to look down. "I want them to see and appreciate small flowers, because they are the kind of detailing that can be translated to a garden of any size. I am so pleased when people ask about *Adiantum aleuticum*, with its lovely black stems and flat pinnae, and *Lamium orvala*, which goes so well with all of the spring bulbs – everyone should grow them both." The colours of his spring garden are green flowers and foliage, pale creams and soft yellows and limes, dotted with purple and violet. The fresh chartreuse-green leaves of the internal hedging and the 'borrowed' beech woods that run alongside the garden, enhances their impact. "It looks so natural with the bulbs below. I love the freshness that is so special to the spring garden, when it has just appeared, before you have started tidying and deadheading. That special time from the emergence of the first bulbs and perennials to when they start to reveal their full glory is just magical." □

Turn the page for two of Claus's spring plant combinations and 12 of his favourite plants

USEFUL INFORMATION

You can follow Claus Dalby's blog at **clausdalby.dk**
Anne Just's garden in Jutland opens to the public from April to September. See **annejust.dk** for details.





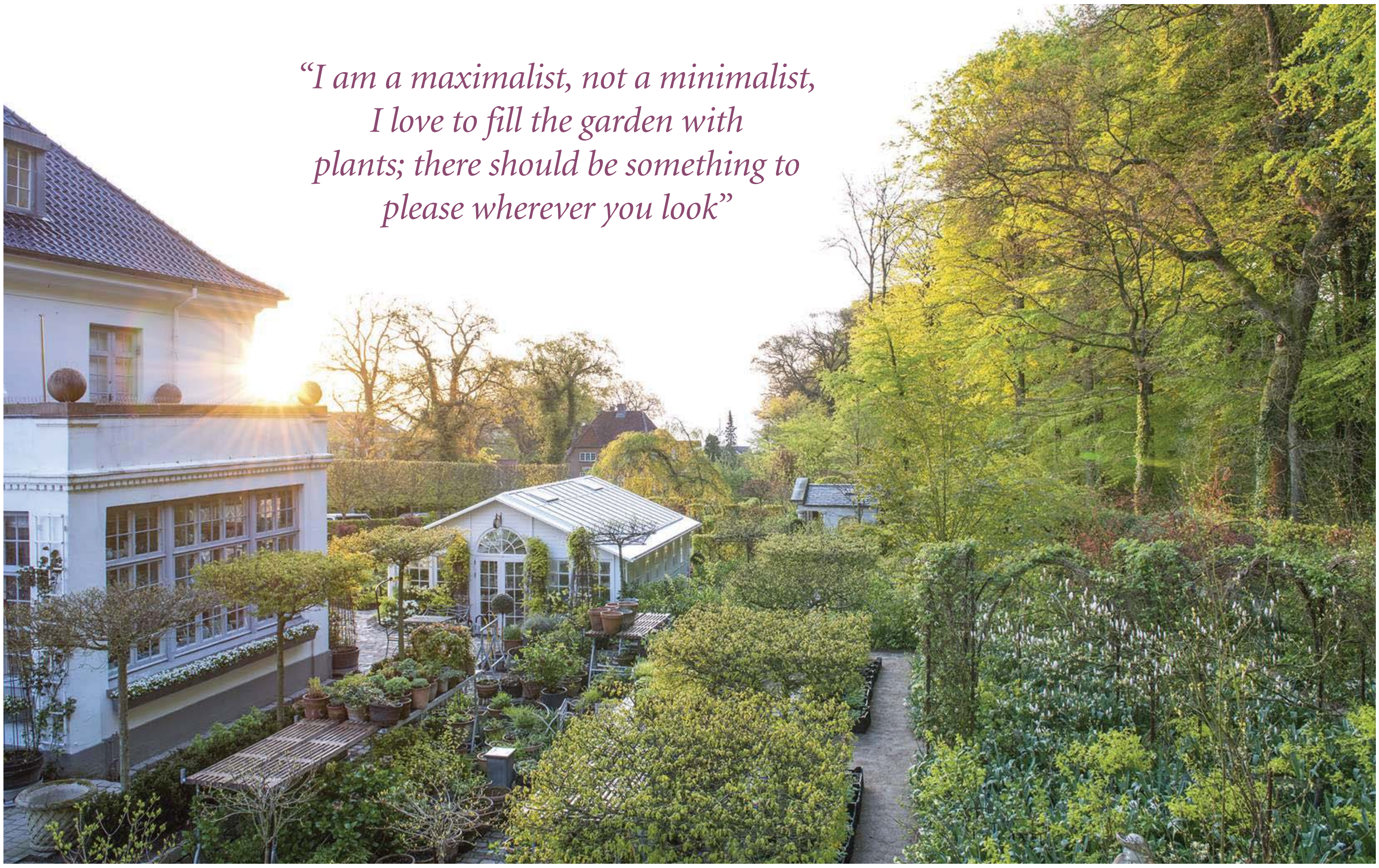
Clockwise from top left

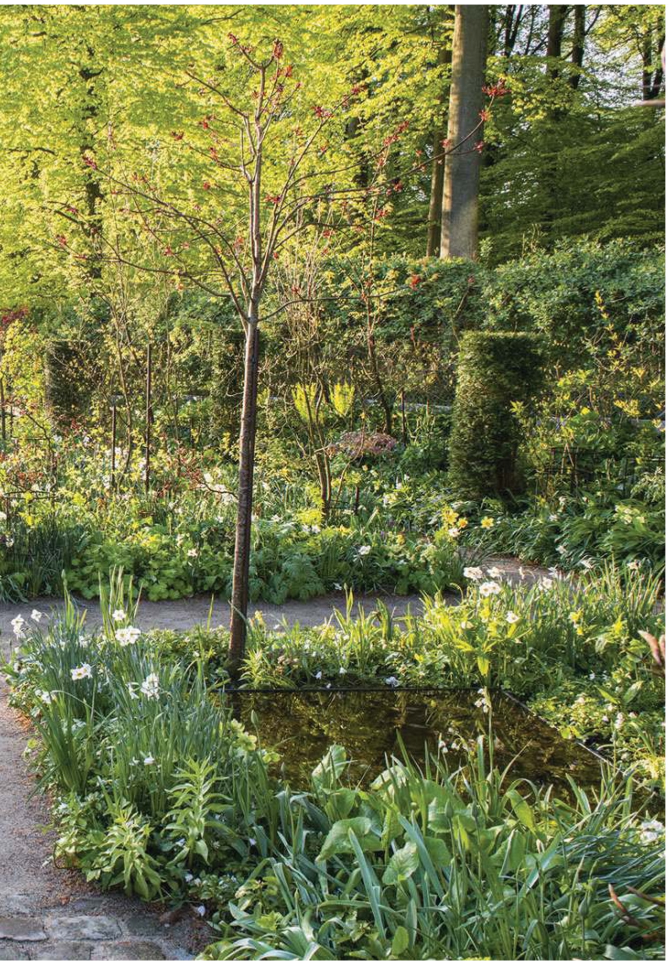
The main central path that runs through the English Garden to the Formal Garden is lined with pale-yellow and white tulips and narcissi in a colour theme that mixes foliage and flowers in shades of white and green.

Clipped hedging is a strong feature in spring. In the Sunken Garden, to the side of the house, the umbrella forms of *Carpinus betulus* have been influenced by Claus's visits to Dutch gardens.

The two shallow reflecting pools that form the Water Garden serve to mirror surrounding plantings and the taller trees found in the neighbouring Woodland Garden – and they are also much enjoyed by visiting birds.

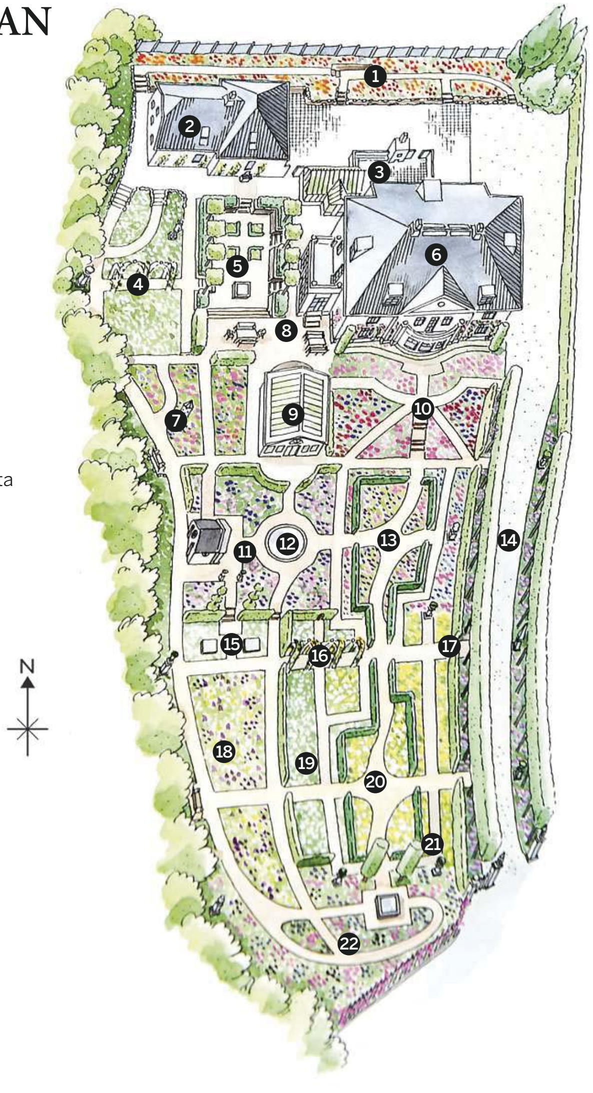
"I am a maximalist, not a minimalist, I love to fill the garden with plants; there should be something to please wherever you look"

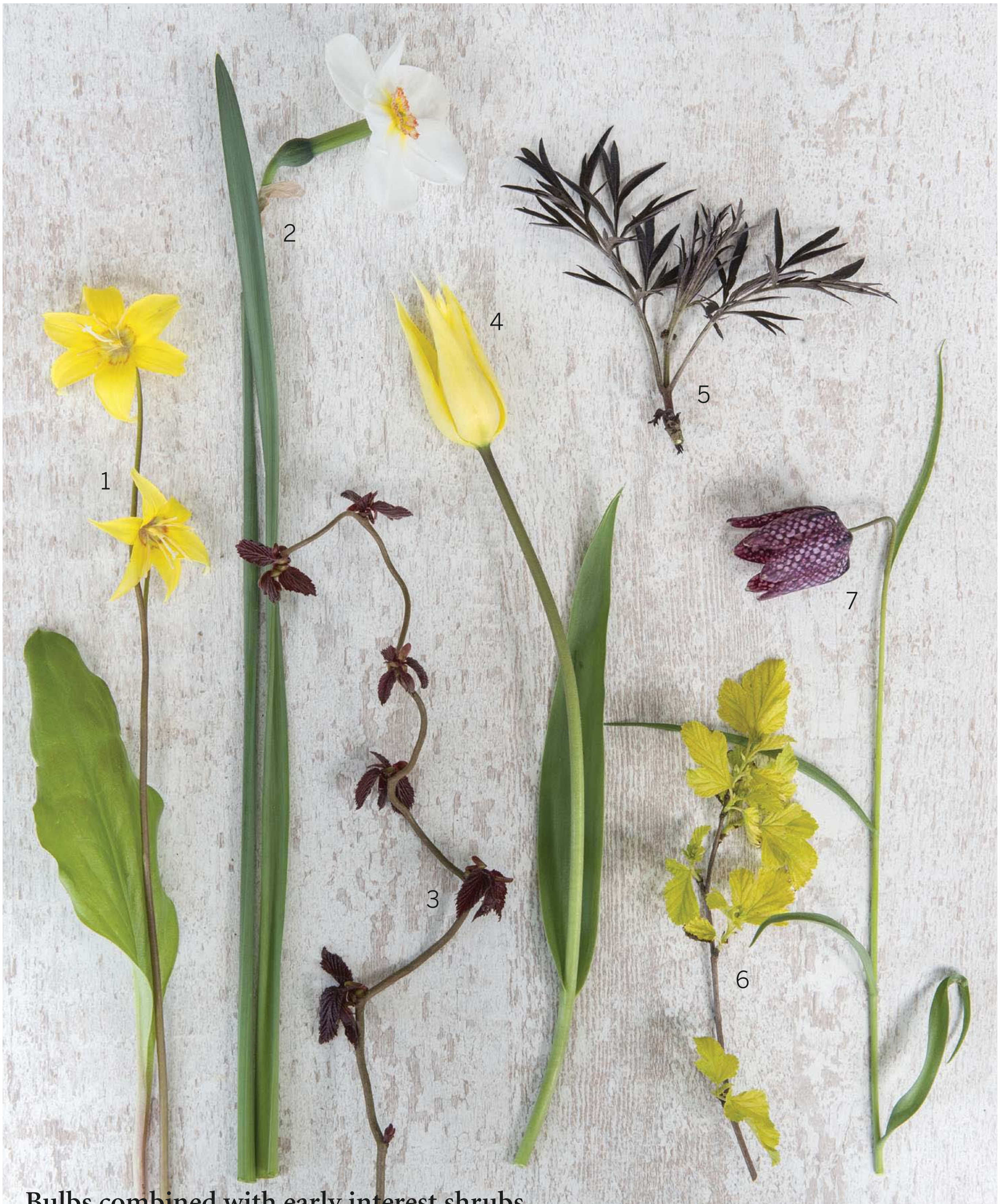




GARDEN PLAN

1 Hot Border
2 Garden guest house
3 Outdoor kitchen
4 Wild Garden
5 Sunken Garden
6 Main manor house
7 Wild Border
8 Terrace
9 Conservatory
10 English Garden
11 Pavilion Garden
12 Mirror pool
13 Formal Garden
14 Allée
15 Water Garden
16 Arbour-covered main vista
17 Main entrance
18 Woodland Garden
19 White Border
20 Formal Garden
21 Yellow Border
22 Prairie Garden

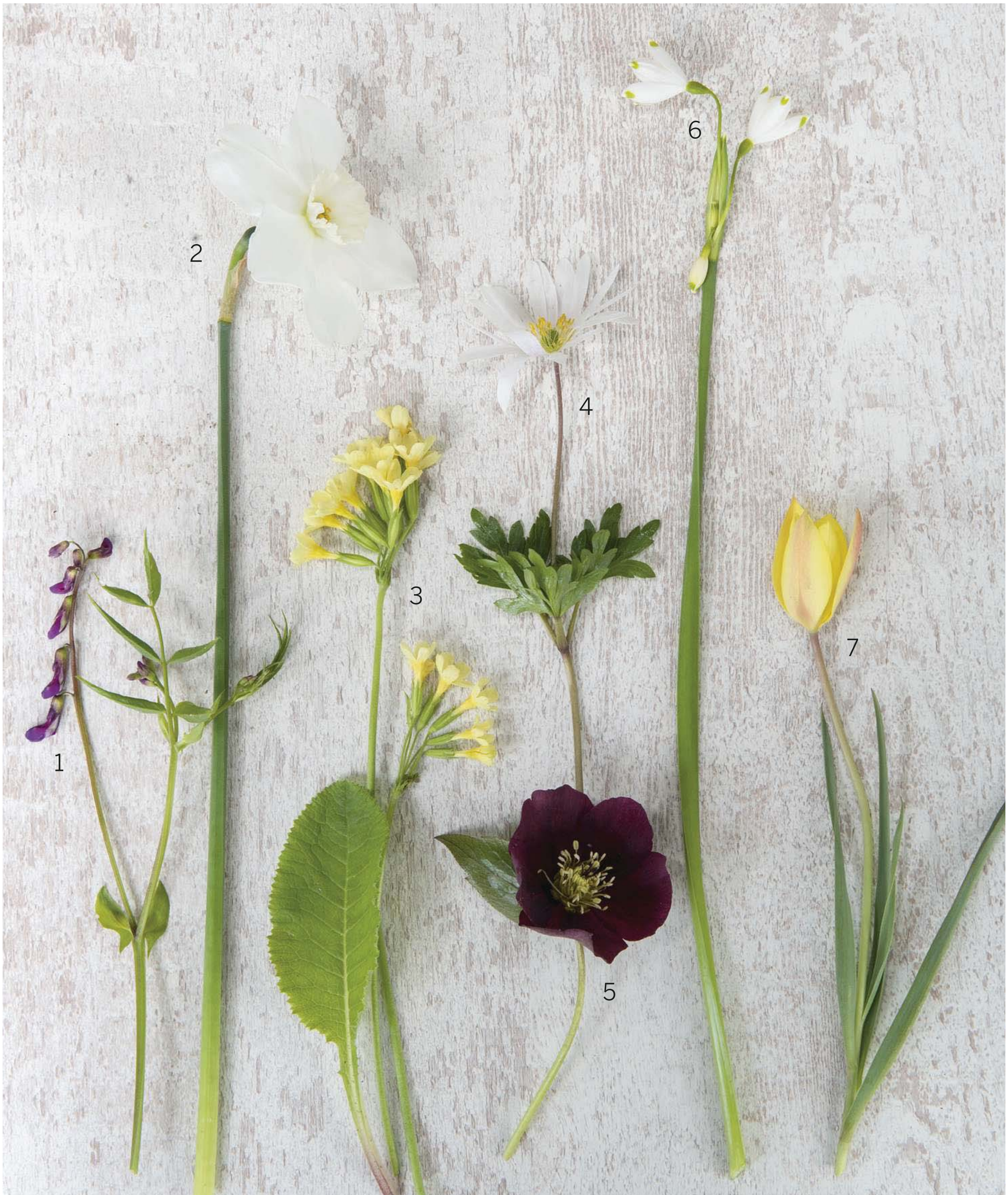




Bulbs combined with early interest shrubs

1 *Erythronium* 'Pagoda'
2 *Narcissus poeticus*
3 *Corylus avellana* 'Red Majestic'
4 *Tulipa* 'Flashback'
5 *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva'
6 *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Nugget'
7 *Fritillaria meleagris*

This is a plant association of contrasting colours, where the bold purple tones of the shrubs *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva' and *Corylus avellana* 'Red Majestic' are subtly linked to the pale yellows and cream shades of *Narcissus poeticus*, *Tulipa* 'Flashback' and *Erythronium* 'Pagoda' by the cream and purple squares of *Fritillaria meleagris*. Contrasting strongly with these purple shades is the bright lime of the young foliage of *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Nugget' tying the whole plant association together in a bold and dramatic fashion. It's a bold scheme but it can pay to experiment.



Bulbs combined with spring perennials

1 ***Lathyrus vernus***
2 ***Narcissus* 'Pipers End'**
3 ***Primula elatior***
4 ***Anemone blanda* 'Alba'**
5 ***Helleborus* x *hybridus***
6 ***Leucojum aestivum***
7 ***Tulipa sylvestris***

Gardens have 'masculine' and 'feminine' forms. Hedges and paths provide the 'masculine' while 'feminine' small plants create a garden's romance with their interwoven cushions of billowing leaves, sprinkled with dainty flowers. Here each plant complements or contrasts with the tones of those around it. *Narcissus* 'Pipers End' and *Leucojum aestivum* provide height and elegance. Below them, *Tulipa sylvestris* and *Helleborus* x *hybridus* are intertwined with the feathery foliage of *Lathyrus vernus* and *Anemone blanda* 'Alba', with *Primula elatior* growing in between. ▷

12 favourite plants for spring colour

1 *Weigela subsessilis* 'Canary'
Its pale-lemon flowers are so pretty, it's surprising that this is not more widely known. Can be grown as a small, upright shrub or, once established, cut down to the ground immediately after flowering, as you would herbaceous perennials. USDA 4a-8b†.

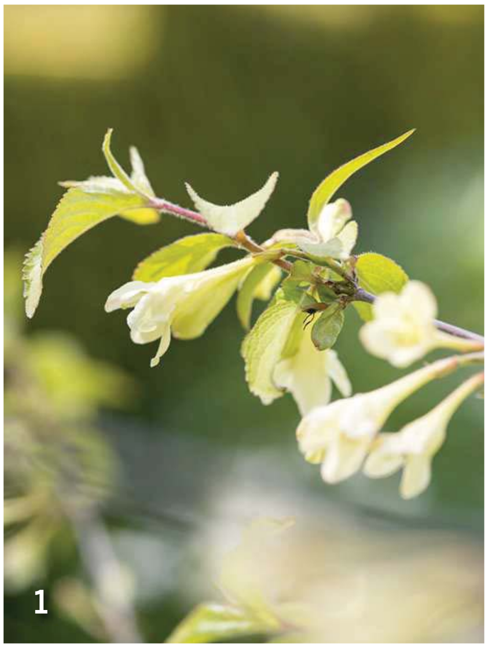
2 *Narcissus* 'Mount Hood'
This is a robust, strong-growing daffodil. Its flowers, which can be up to 10cm across, have lovely creamy petals that mature to white. It comes back year after year. 42cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Primula denticulata* var. *alba*
Distinctive for its round, densely packed flower heads, on stems that lengthen over several weeks. Excellent in groups. This white form is beautiful but Claus also grows other shades. 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3b-9b.

4 *Clematis alpina* 'Stolwijk Gold'
Its beautiful, lime-yellow foliage is the perfect foil for the soft, pyjama-blue flowers. At its best in a sunny situation but it also flourishes in semi-shade. 2.5m. USDA 4a-7b.

5 *Matteuccia struthiopteris*
This elegant deciduous fern, has striking, lime-green, lacy foliage, which slowly unfurls, developing a wonderful architectural shape that lives up to its name of shuttlecock fern. 1.7m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.

6 *Magnolia* x *loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'
A slow-growing, large shrub or small tree that has pretty flowers, blushed with soft pink. It combines beautifully with pale-pink tulips. The flowers need protection from late-spring frosts, it may take three to four years before the first blooms appear. 8m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.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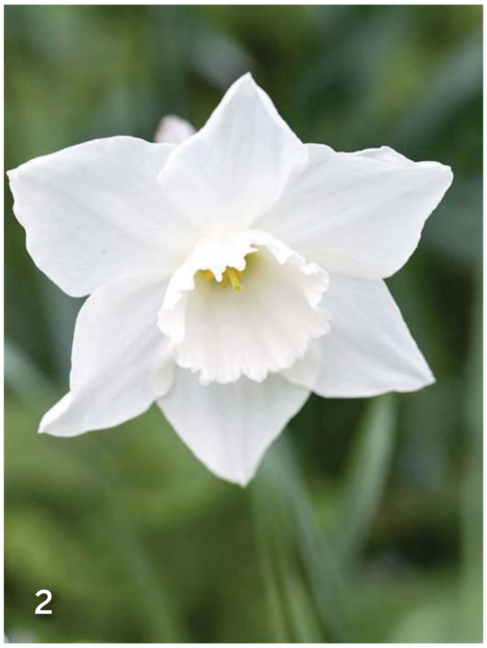
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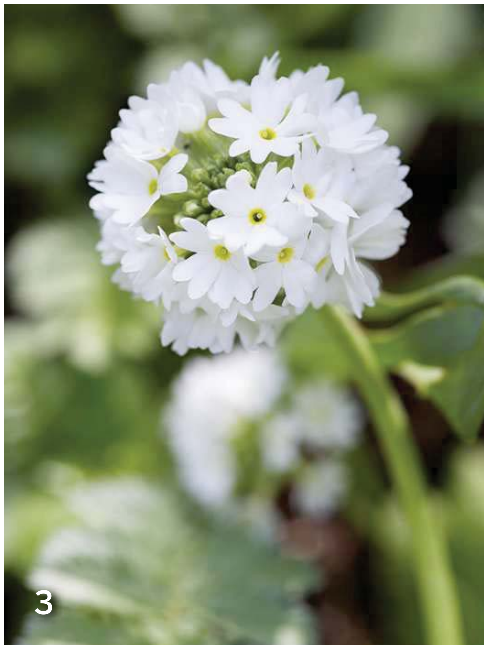
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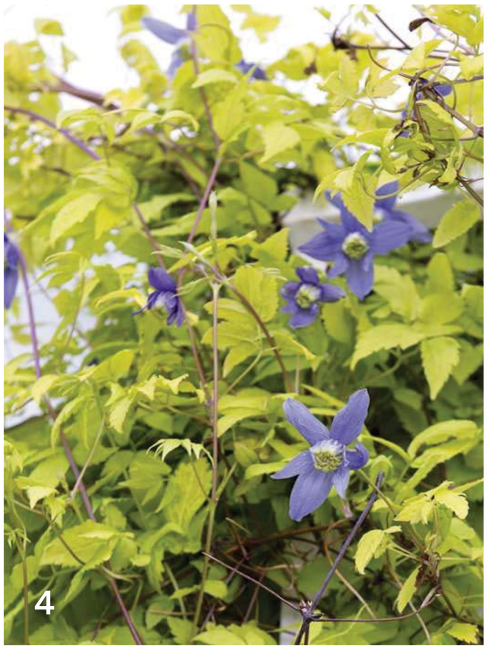
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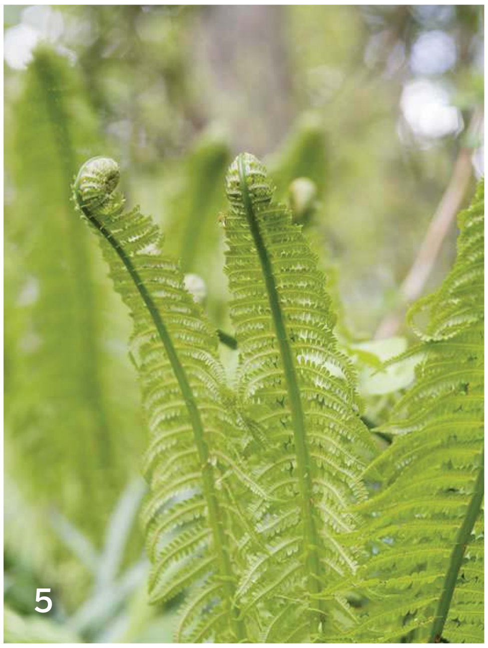
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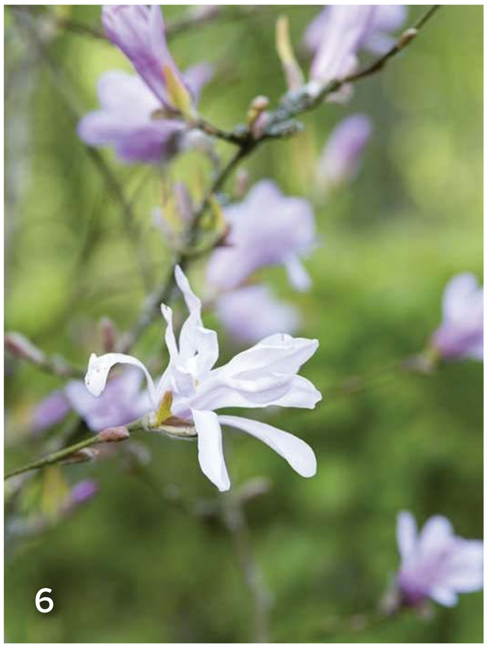
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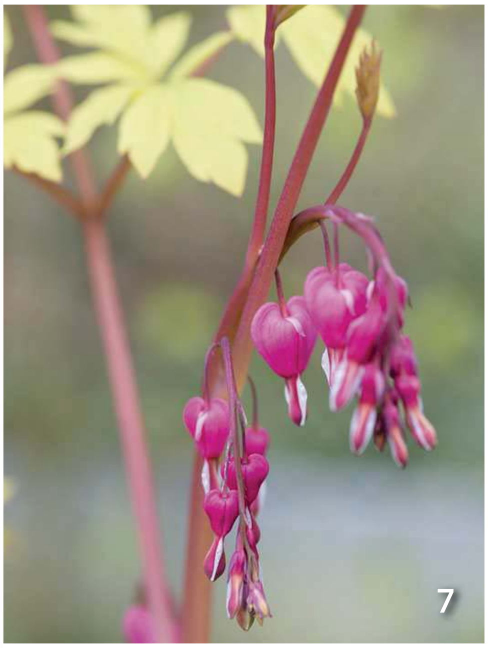
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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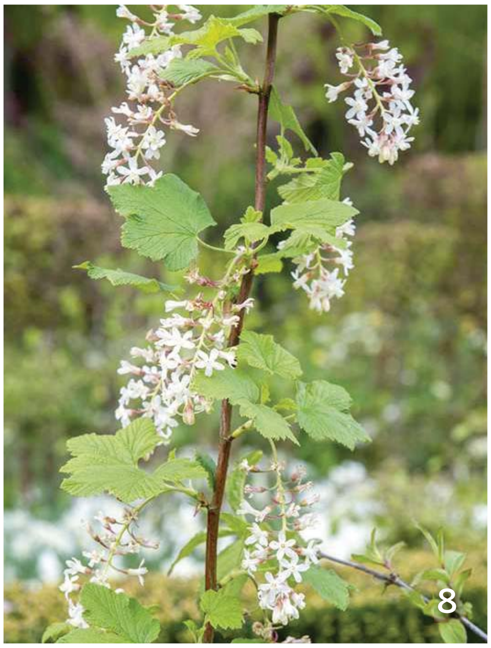
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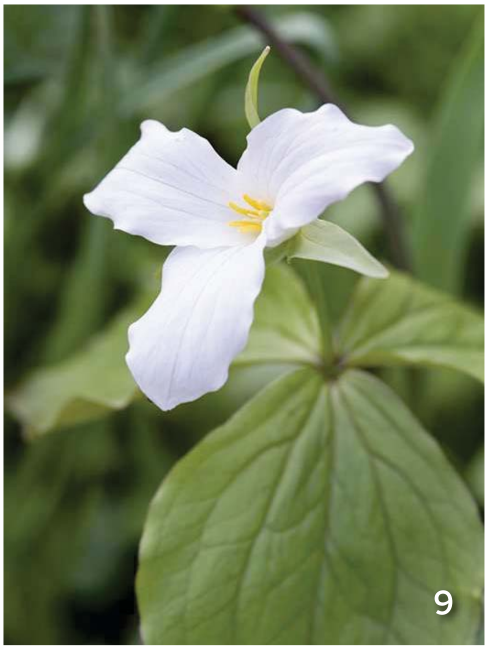
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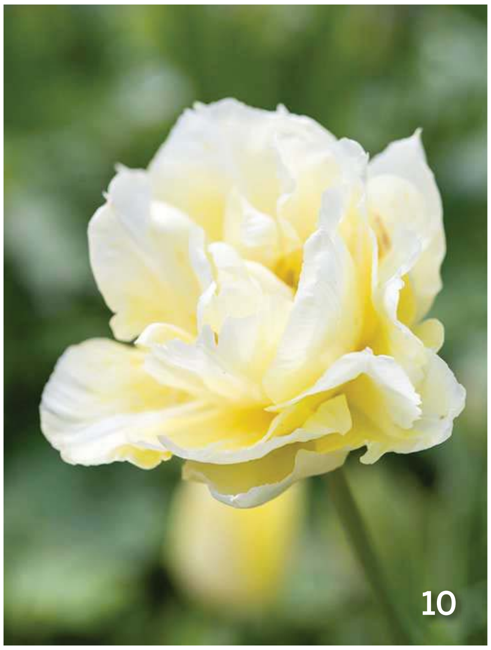
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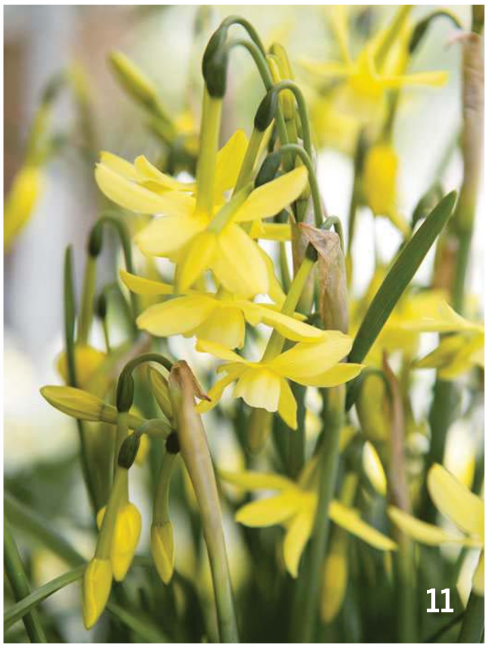
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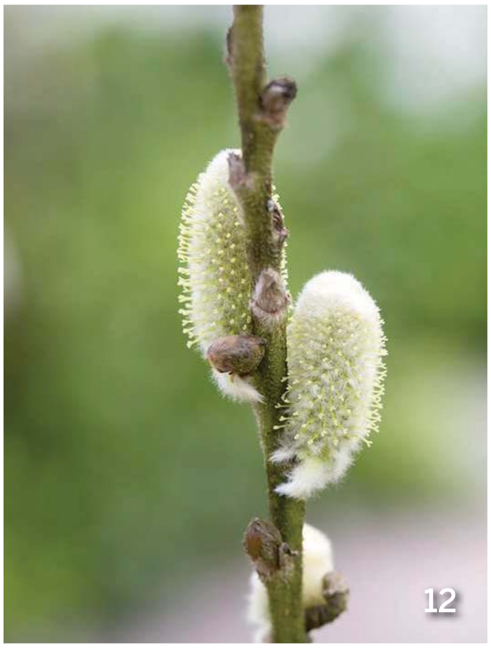
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7 *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Gold Heart'
The young, golden-yellow foliage and pink-tinted stems of this elegant, herbaceous plant combine extremely well with high-impact tulips, such as the bright purple-pink 'Barcelona'. 60cm. USDA 3a-9b.

8 *Ribes sanguineum* White Icicle (= 'Ubric')
This tall deciduous shrub works well with late narcissi and its pretty, white, candelabra flowers and soft, textured young leaves are excellent in bouquets. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

9 *Trillium grandiflorum*
The purity and architecture of this graceful perennial's white flowers makes it a perfect fit for Claus's Woodland Garden. Needs humus-rich soil. 40cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

10 *Tulipa* 'Mount Tacoma'
The buds of this tulip open to flouncy, peony-like flowers of creamy white, with occasional green shading. Claus feels too many doubles can make the garden look too fussy, so he aims to limit them to around ten per cent. 45cm. USDA 3a-8b.

11 *Narcissus* 'Hawera'
Multi-headed with soft-yellow flowers and inconspicuous, narrow foliage. It's good at the front of a border, is wind tolerant and copes well with dry, sunny sites. 25cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Salix lanata*
This compact, slow-growing, deciduous shrub with lots of stems has silver, early catkins followed by wonderfully textured, grey leaves. In Claus's garden it is planted under *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula'. A real 'show stopper'. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

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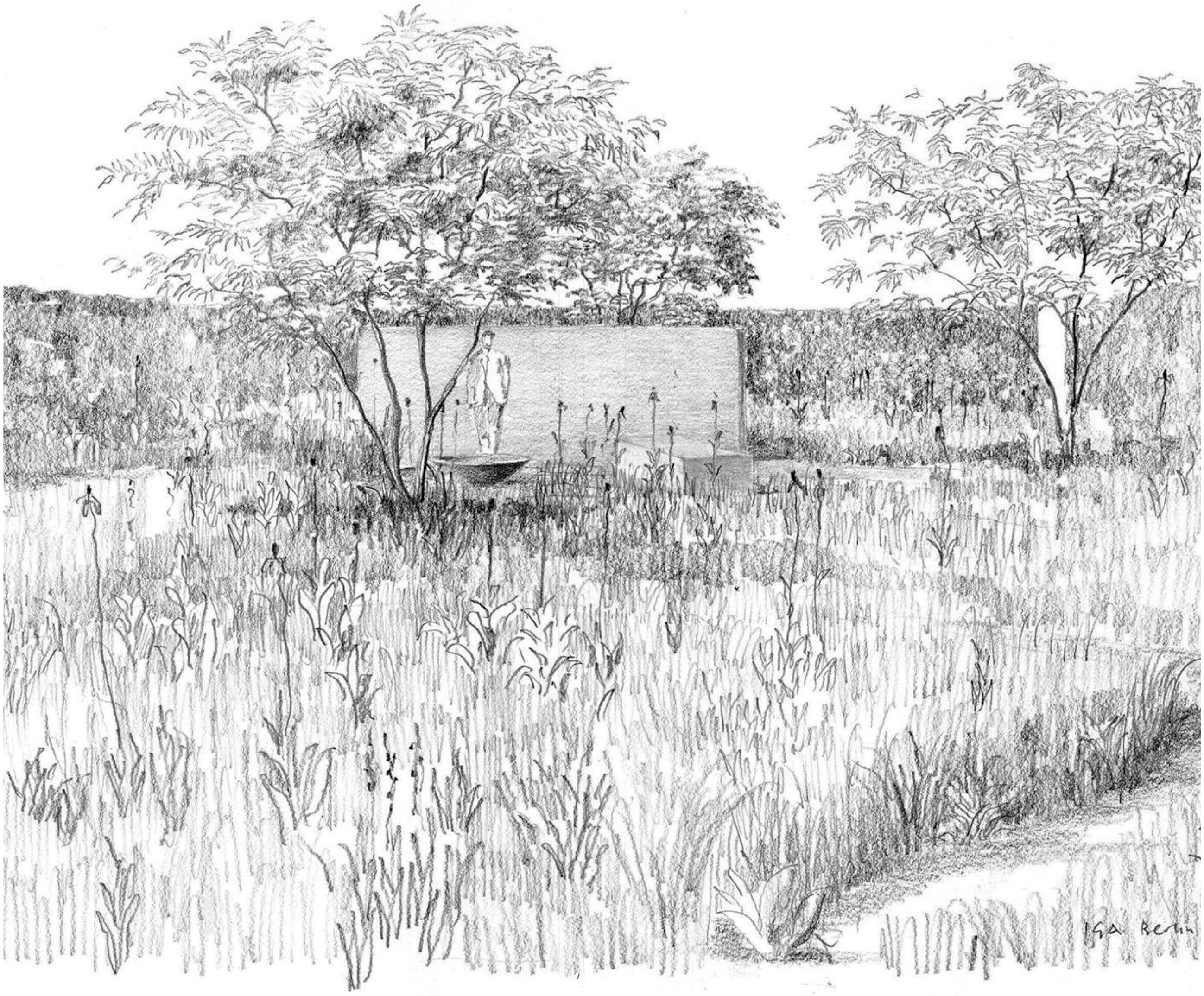
design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

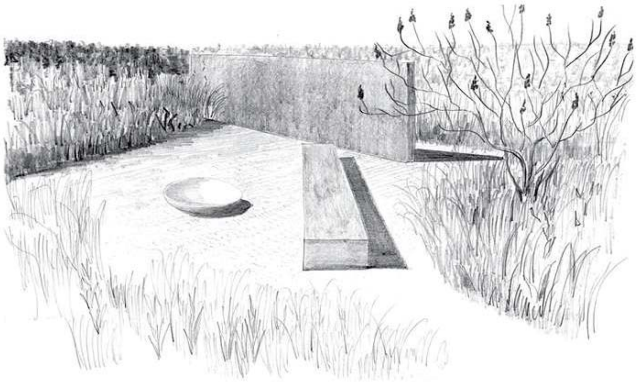
UPDATE COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**



GARDEN FESTIVAL

Meadowlands

This month sees the launch of a new garden festival in Berlin. IGA Berlin is a six-month festival of garden design, held in five areas of the newly developed 250-acre Kienberg Park. One of the highlights will be a meadow garden by UK garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith. Set in 350 square metres of former wasteland next to Kienberg Park, Tom's garden is based on a wild meadow with a sprinkling of *Rhus typhina* trees. Paths cut through the tall grass will lead to a cleared area with a simple concrete wall, bench and iron firebowl. 13 April – 15 October 2017. **iga-berlin-2017.de/en**



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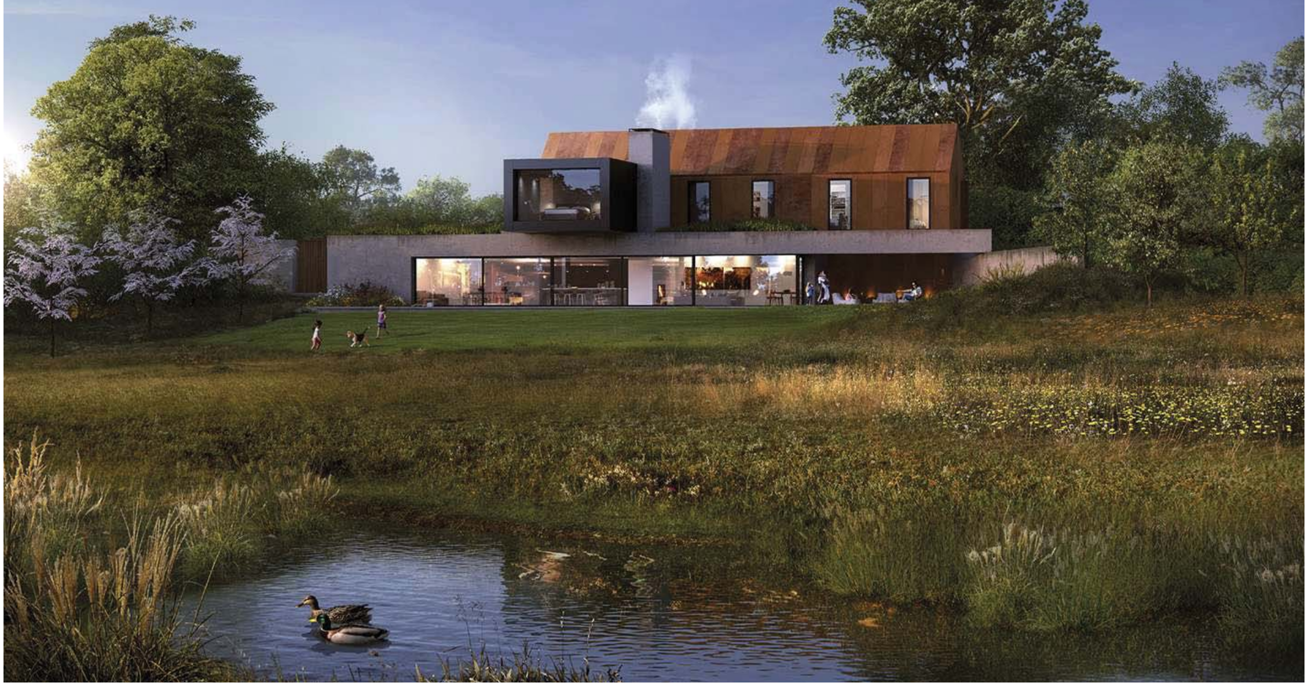
RE-LANDSCAPING

Back to nature

An agricultural field in the beautiful Lincolnshire Wolds will be returned to wildflower pasture and chalk grassland as part of a design for a new-build house. The family home, designed by ID Architecture, echoes the shape of a traditional Lincolnshire barn and stands on a concrete plinth. The house is set into the hillside to allow the meadow to encase the plinth at the entrance. At the back it is sheltered by mixed species trees and hedges. An expanse of grass sward gives on to meadowland where an existing pond will be improved with waterside planting. **idarchitecture.co.uk**



RESTORATION

Ahead of the curve

An 1820s curvilinear glasshouse, one of the earliest of its kind in the UK, has opened to the public at Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire after a year-long restoration. The domed roof originally allowed for the cultivation of palms and other large exotics as well as grapes and peaches. The damaged, cast-iron frame was repaired by Dorothea Restorations and included the replacement of more than 7,500 panes of glass. A biomass boiler will heat sections of the glasshouse to re-create the conditions needed for tender fruit and exotics. The restoration is part of a £9.4 million transformation of the National Trust property. **nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank**

POTTED HISTORY

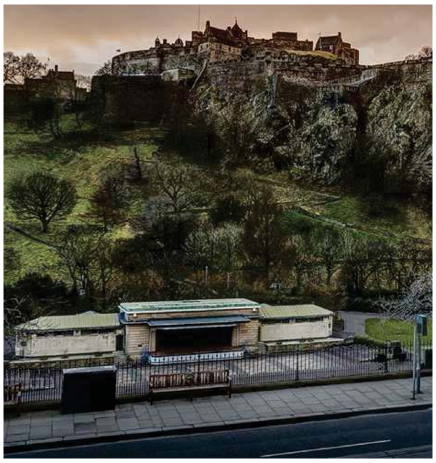
Inspired by medieval archaeological finds, this distressed iron Jadis Bell Krater pot from Oka will make an elegant container for summer displays on a terrace or balcony. Standing 28cm high with a 33cm diameter it costs £125. Tel 0844 815 7380, oka.com

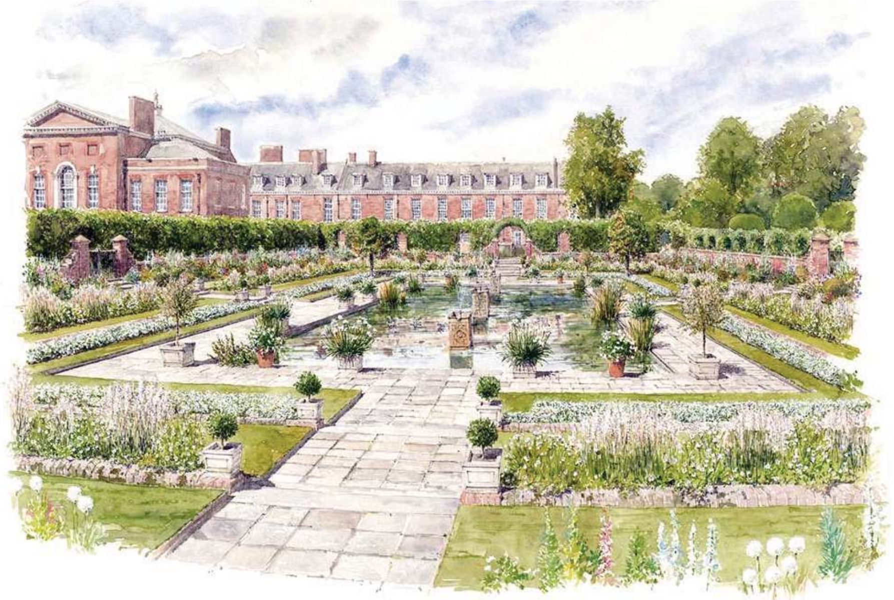
ID ARCHITECTURE, NICK KING

COMPETITION

Centre stage

An ageing bandstand that sits in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle is set to be transformed into a contemporary venue for cultural events. The design for a new pavilion and visitor centre to replace the 1930s Ross Bandstand in West Princes Street Gardens will be chosen from entries to an architectural competition organised by Malcolm Reading Consultants. The project is being managed by the Ross Development Trust working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. **malcolmreading.co.uk**





MEMORIAL GARDEN

Dressed in white

Throughout spring and summer, the Sunken Garden at Kensington Palace – once home to Diana, Princess of Wales, who died 20 years ago this year – will get a white makeover to celebrate Diana's life. Spring planting includes *Fritillaria persica* 'Alba', *Narcissus* 'Petrel', and tulips 'Diana', 'Spring Green' and 'Purissima' emerging through a swathe of white forget-me-nots. In summer, pots of white roses will surround the reflective pool and beds will be filled with lilies, gladioli, cosmos and gaura. The planting will complement the current exhibition *Diana: Her Fashion Story,* which runs at Kensington Palace until 28 February 2018. **hrp.org.uk**

BALI AWARDS

Best kept secret

Anne Jennings of Viridian Landscape Studio has won the Principal Award for Design Excellence in the BALI 2016 awards for a private garden in London. The owners of the Chelsea home wanted the feel of a secret garden with large trees and ivy-covered walls. A shepherd's hut, with distressed paintwork and a retrofit moss roof, was commissioned as a children's playhouse, while York paving and pieces of architectural salvage add to the atmosphere. **baliawards.co.uk**

Notebook

- Although better known for his garden photography, Andrew Lawson is also an accomplished artist and his wife Briony a well-known sculptor. The couple are opening their home and garden for a joint exhibition, ***Shared Visions, Shared Lives***, which will feature paintings, sculpture, drawings and photographs spanning more than 45 years of the couple working together. Charlbury, Oxfordshire. 22 April – 1 May, 2-6pm. Tel 01608 810654 or email exhibition@susielawson.co.uk for more information.
- WWOO, the **outdoor kitchen system** designed by Dutch designer Piet-Jan van den Kommer, is now available in the UK. The concrete kitchens were seen last year at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and are a stylish way to make the most of outdoor living. Components can be bought individually and include an integrated steel fireplace, a stainless steel sink and wooden storage crates. wwoo.co.uk
- Don't miss the Garden Trust's tour of **gardens in northeast Scotland**. Based in Aberdeen, the six-day tour will visit a wide range of gardens, from the well known to some rarely seen private gardens, and includes Her Majesty's retreat at Balmoral and Pitmuies House near Forfar with summer borders created by the late Margaret Ogilvie. 30 June – 6 July. thegardenstrust.org
- Book ahead for **two new design courses** at RHS Wisley, Surrey. Adam White will offer innovative solutions to the challenge of integrating play equipment in Designing Gardens for Children (1 June, 10.30-4pm), while Andrew Fisher Tomlin offers ideas for Designing Front Gardens (16 September, 10.30-4pm). rhs.org.uk/education-learning

MALCOLM READING CONSULTANTS AND DAVID SPRINGFORD, © HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES, ANNE JENNINGS

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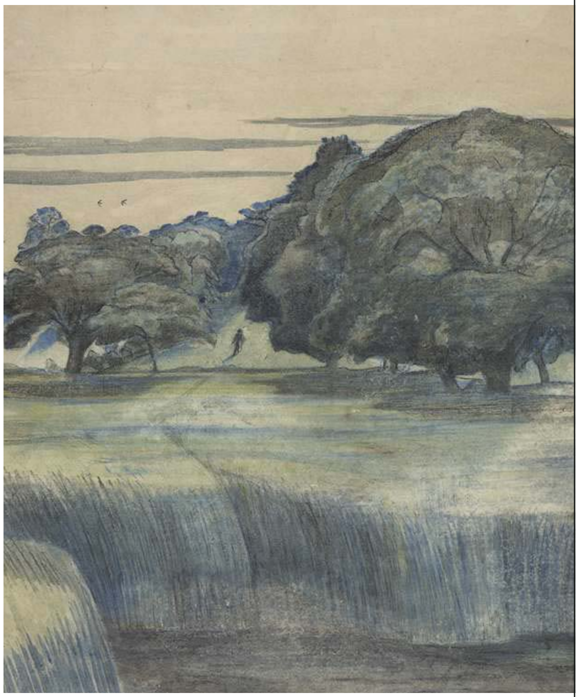

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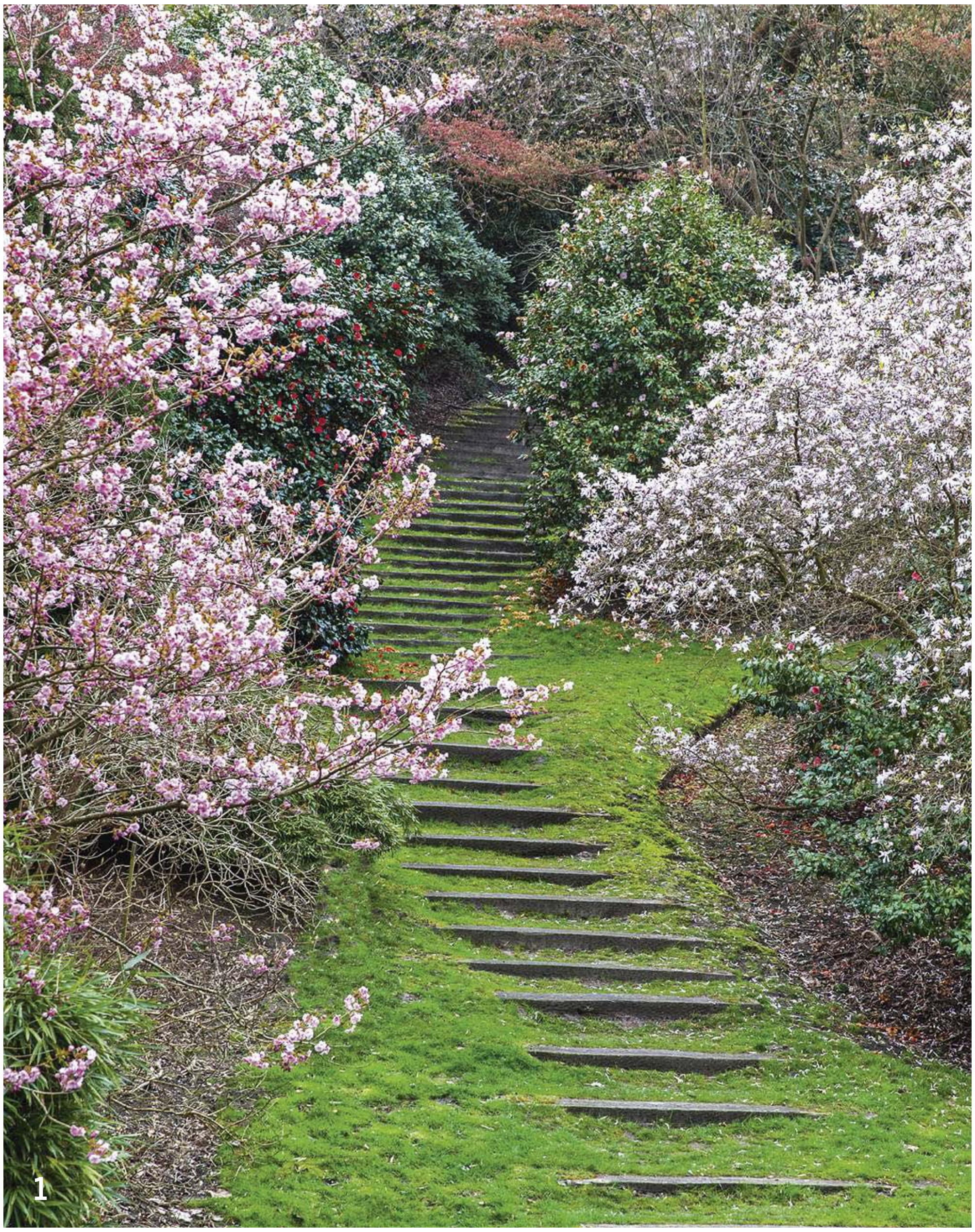
Paul Nash (1889–1946), *The Wanderer* (detail).
Watercolour with blue chalk and graphite, 1911.
Presented by the Contemporary Art Society.

1 Picture perfect

If you are looking for romantic steps, look no further than this garden near Virginia Water in Surrey. Simple timber risers and grass treads meander among falling cherry, camellia and magnolia flowers. Great for wedding photos, apart from the omnipresent danger of grass stains on the bride's ivory tulle.



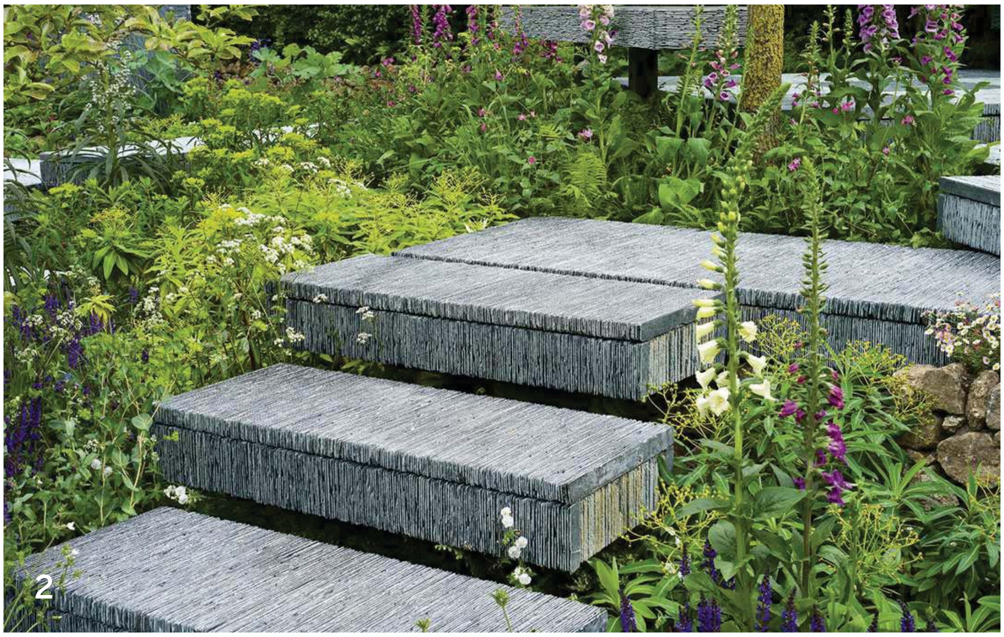
1 DAVE ZUBRASKI / GAP PHOTOS

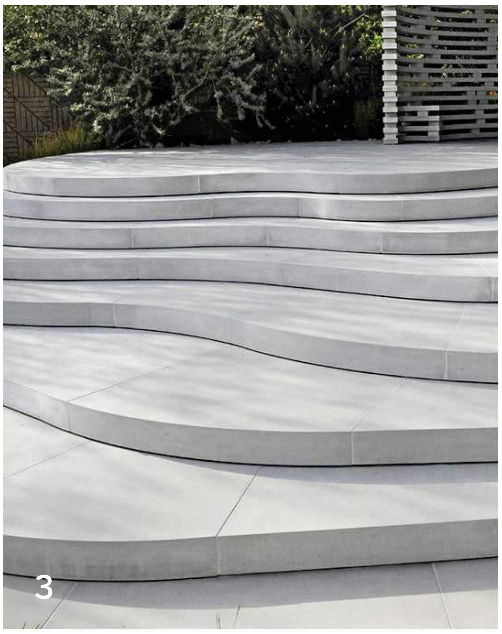
James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and founder of into-gardens.com. He has served on the RHS Council for the past five years.

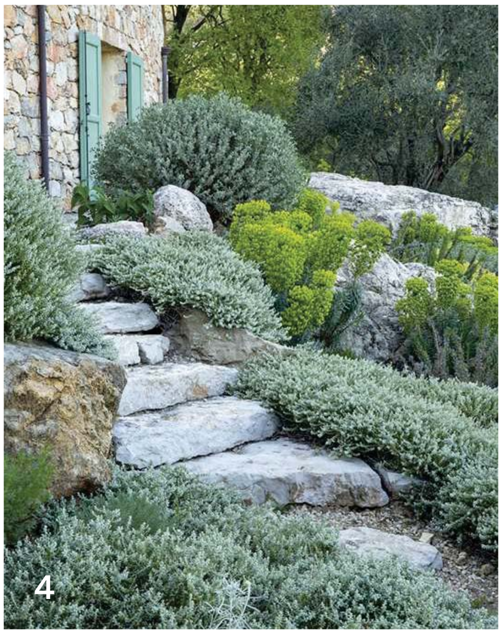
Flights of fancy

Embrace uneven landscapes, advises garden designer James Alexander-Sinclair. Those lumps and bumps are the perfect excuse for installing the steps of your dreams

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR







2 ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS – DESIGNER: DARREN HAWKES LANDSCAPES, SPONSOR: BREWIN DOLPHIN.
3 ANDREA JONES / GAP PHOTOS – DESIGN: JINNY BLOM, BUILT BY STEVE SWATTON, SPONSOR: B&Q. 4 MARIANNE MAJERUS

2 Stair of the show

This is a detail from Darren Hawkes's Gold Medal Brewin Dolphin Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2015. Hundreds of slate slices were put together to form platforms, screens and steps. The garden has now been rebuilt at the Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens near Penzance.

3 Twists and turns

Steps do not have to be straight. Here Jinny Blom has made them almost fluid in her design for the Sentebale 'Forget-Me-Not' Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2013. They ooze and flow, and are at once steep and loping. This gives the visitor lots of different routes to the central building based on a traditional Lesotho roundhouse.

4 Continental charm

These beautiful steps look as if they have just been thrown together using stones lying around the garden. But looks can be deceptive, as this sort of thing takes a lot of clever stonemasonry and a good designer. This Mediterranean garden (with masses of gorgeous euphorbias) was designed by James Basson.

In the immortal words of Led Zeppelin: 'There's a lady who's sure / All that glitters is gold / And she's buying a stairway to heaven.' I have always imagined this staircase to be something that sashays seductively as it disappears into the cumulonimbus; it is made of fine limestone carved with mythical creatures and entwined with exotically scented flowers. One thing is for sure, this is no paltry indoor arrangement, but the spiffiest set of garden steps ever.

There are very, very few gardens without steps, even if it is only one step down from threshold to terrace. This is because the world is not, thank goodness, universally level. There will always be dips and drops, hills and hollows as we attempt to landscape our gardens to our convenience. Steps, more than any other hard landscaped feature in our gardens, have the ability to be so many things. They can be discreet and modest, coquettish, extravagant, sweeping or narrow, but whatever style you choose they all have to work. It is the perfect example of form following function: no matter how pretty a step might be, it is no use if it doesn't get you up the hill.

First of all a lesson in anatomy: a step consists of a riser (governing the height of each step) and a tread (which covers the depth of the bit you put your foot on). In most houses you will find each component of the staircase measures about 20cm. This is a bit steep for a garden, so ideally the tread for an outdoor step will be a minimum of 30cm and the riser about 1.5cm. They can be deeper, shallower and as wide as you like, but preferably no higher. It is also important that each step in a flight is the same, otherwise, sure as eggs is eggs, somebody will fall over and there will be many tears and much swearing. Consideration should also be given to handrails; if you're going to include them, make sure they are ▷

5 Size is everything

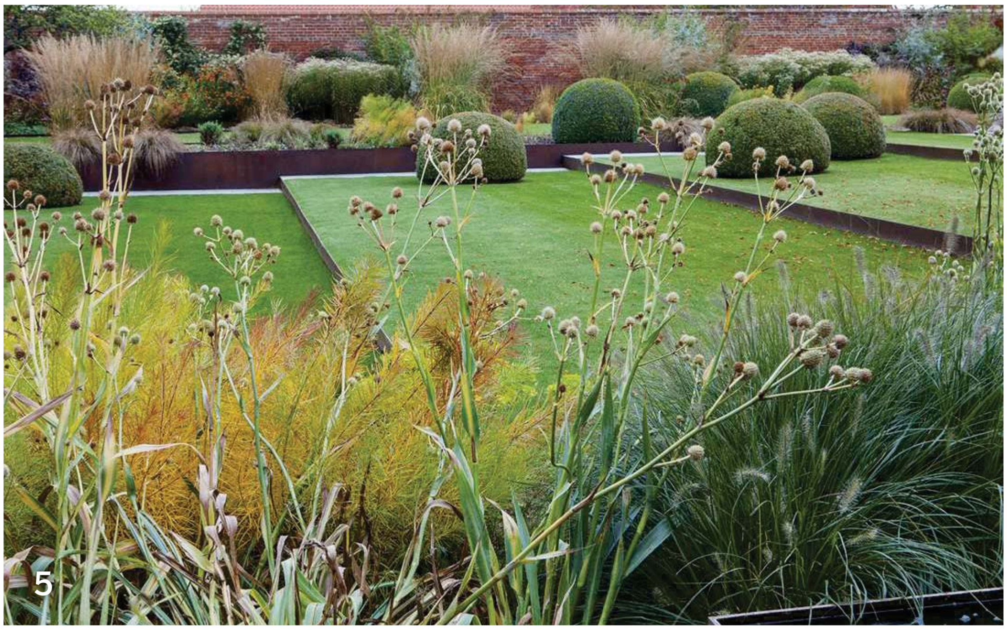
These are massive steps: edged with Corten steel, they cleverly solve the problem of a sloping lawn in this Norfolk garden. One option would be to have a series of rolling terraces, but Tom Stuart-Smith has been much bolder (as we would expect) and more architectural. I particularly like the clipped box dumplings sitting in the grass.

6 For the sure-footed

There are many advantages to diaphanous, transparent steps, although they might not suit those of a nervous disposition. These ones are practical, but, at the same time, do not block the view of the pond and planting below. You need a good metalworker to help achieve the effect, which would be ruined if the steps bent under pressure.

7 Precision planning

I love cantilevered steps: they look so effortless, even though there are doubtless all sorts of clever counterbalancing devices and engineering solutions in place on the other side of that beautiful basalt wall. I really like the way the gravel path is made from the same stone as the steps, and the planting is good as well.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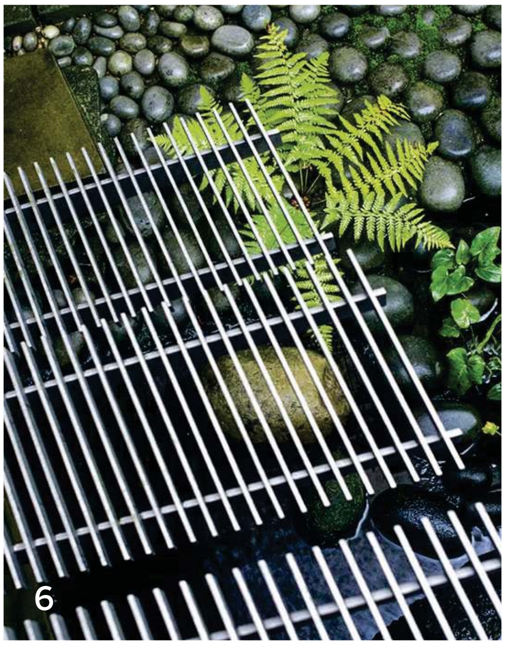
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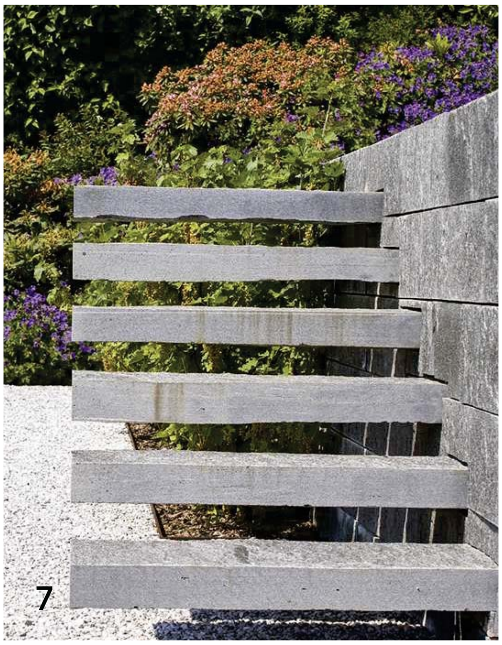
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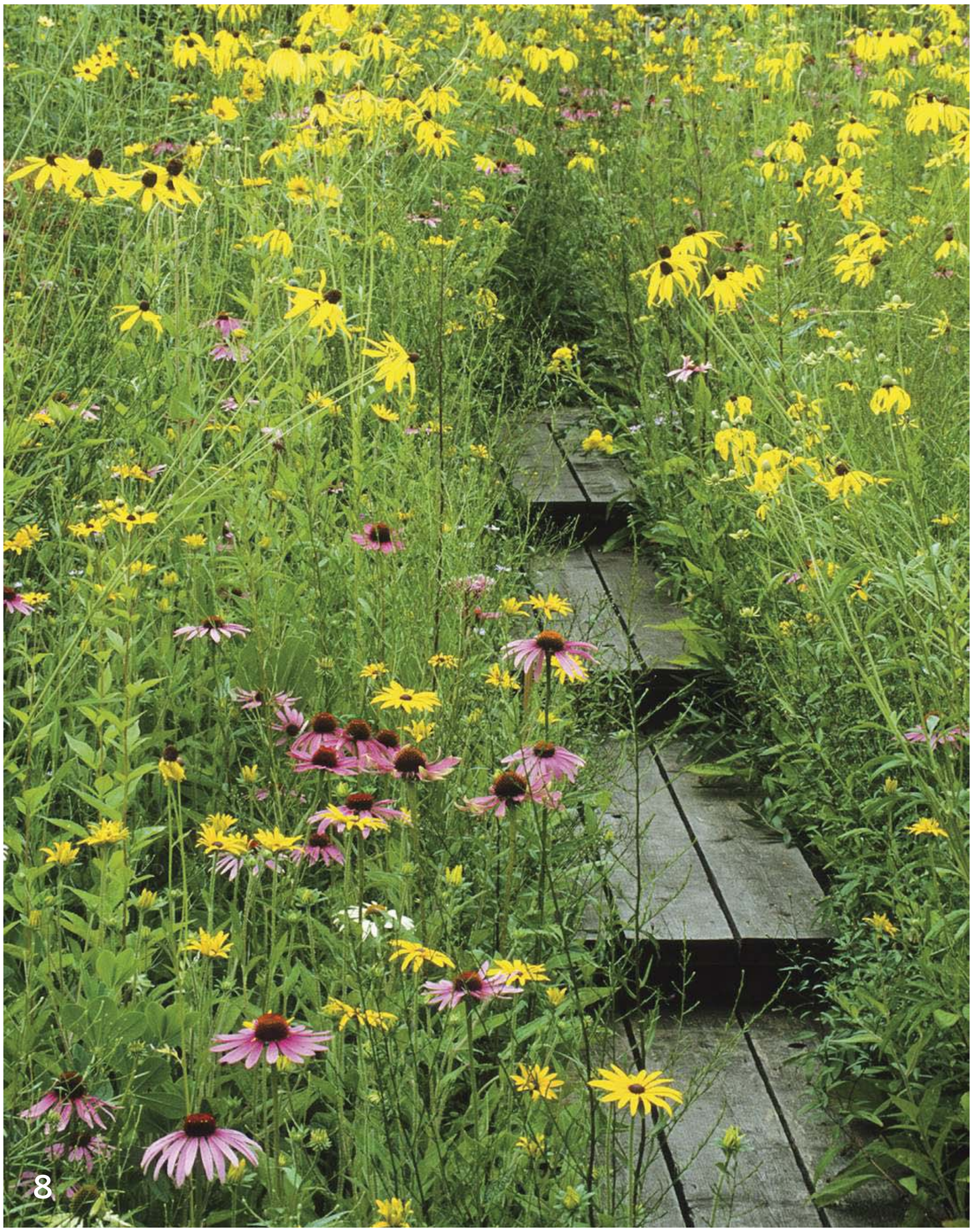
5 MARIANNE MAJERUS, 6 GARDEN WORLD IMAGES, 7 GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

▷ safe as you don't want your elderly relations ending up in the herbaceous border. There, that's the dull technical bit out of the way.

Steps fall into two categories. First, there are those that allow us to travel from one place to another – utilitarian steps, the white T-shirts and jeans of landscaping. They can be made from anything (brick, stone, wood, steel) provided they work. That said, if you find yourself at the foot of an elegantly constructed flight of steps while pushing a laden wheelbarrow, the charm of said steps may swiftly pall. A ramp is worth considering, either instead of or in addition to the steps. If that is impossible, long, shallow steps work well as you can bump a barrow up them with a bit of momentum if they only have a single brick riser.

The second category is much more exciting as it gives us the opportunity to fulfil our purpose but with style and pizzazz. Think elaborate Busby Berkeley musical sets, with steps as the main feature. There are examples of such complex designs throughout history, although, unsurprisingly, the grandest steps occur in the most palatial of gardens – you need at least a palazzo to get away with the sort of thing that can easily accommodate two crinoline-wearing court ladies or even the most modest of minstrel troupes. Steps can, and do, make a fabulous central feature to a sweeping lawn or walk between herbaceous borders. They can flare, sweep, cascade or plummet; they can incorporate ornamental balustrades, sculptures or water (I have designed a couple of flights of steps with small rills that trickle through the treads). This makes them less static and adds an element of sound, which is good for keeping visitors alert.

However, those of you without substantial acreages should not despair, as steps can work just as well, if not better, in a small



8 JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS - DESIGN: JAMES HITCHMOUGH

8 Ways with wood

These beautifully aged, timber boardwalk steps nudge their way through a vibrant and romantic naturalistic planting scheme designed by Professor James Hitchmough for his own garden. Timber is a great material for steps as it lighter than stone and involves much less substructure. Wooden steps are extremely versatile; they can float over undulations or bridge borders and streams.

Further reading

Construction Detailing for Landscape and Garden Design: Surfaces, Steps and Margins by Paul Hensey (Routledge, 2016). Contains the elements most often used when detailing surfaces, with key information on standards, guidance and construction.

The RHS Essential Garden Planning and Construction by Christopher Brickell (Mitchell Beazley, 2006). The definitive step-by-step guide to selecting and building a wide range of garden structures. It also provides key information needed for planning the design and construction of your garden.

garden. Steps can multi-task: if you have the space, try to make yours just a little bit wider than necessary as they can then act as useful shelves for containers and pots. They can also be a comfortable place to sit. I have many photographs of family members lolling around on steps, as they provide the perfect opportunity for the artistic arrangement of children of varying sizes. Steps can be a site of entertainment – remember slinkies, those coiled springs that insinuate themselves down staircases? And they're a good place for vigorous exercise, jumping or running up and down.

There are steps for every garden and every occasion. The most important thing is to build flights that work well; once you have the functional bit sorted, you can really let your imagination run riot. □

Places to visit

Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens occupy a beautiful sheltered valley in west Cornwall. There is much to see in these dramatic, exotic and sub-tropical gardens, including Darren Hawkes's garden shown on page 97, and artworks by renowned artists such as James Turrell and David Nash RA. **tremenheere.co.uk**

Further afield are the magnificent Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy. Long steps, short steps, dry steps and wet steps – you'll be spoilt for choice. **florence-museum.com**

The Potemkin Stairs in Odessa, Ukraine, are not just a magnificent set of steps but also an optical illusion, as you can't see them from the top. And be warned – there are lots of them.

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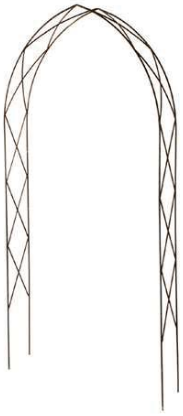
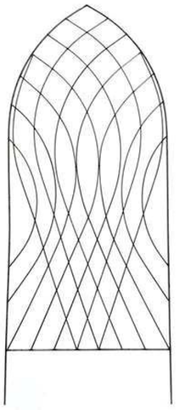
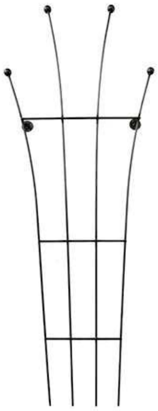


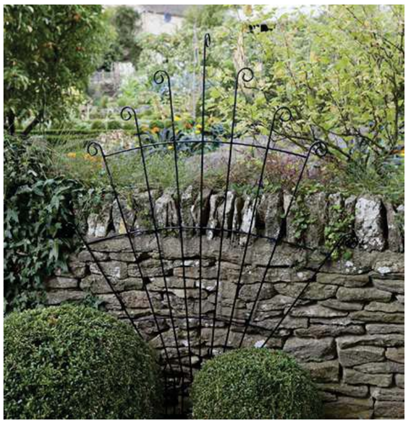
MAKE AN ENTRANCE
Gothic Arch,
(270 x 120cm), £305, Muntons,
0800 130 3421, muntons.net



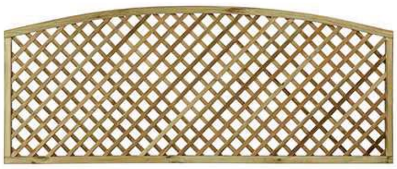
NATURAL LOOK
Raw Metal Arch Trellis,
(195 x 77cm), £59.95, The Worm that Turned,
0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk



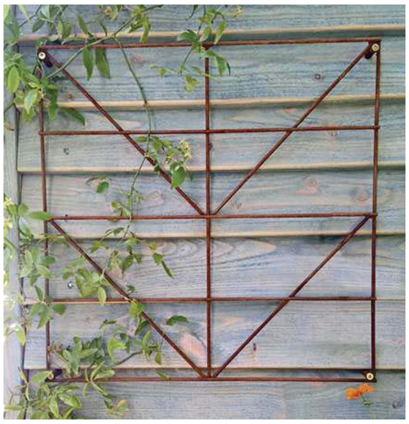
COUNTRY CLASSIC
Barrington Honeysuckle Trellis,
(165 x 60cm), £55, Garden Trading,
01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk



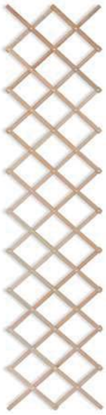
ELEGANCE ITSELF
Peacock Trellis,
(123 x 102cm), £65, Agriframes,
0117 934 1790, agriframes.co.uk



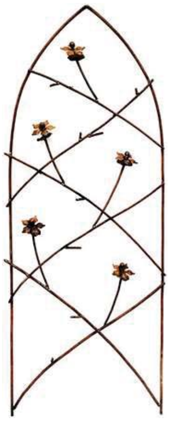
ASSORTED SIZES
Diagonal Trellis Convex Arched Topper Panel,
(from 30 x 180cm), from £19, The Garden
Trellis Co, 01255 688361, gardentrellis.co.uk



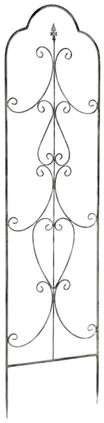
MODULAR SYSTEM
Climbing Square,
(50 x 50cm), £22, Plant Belles,
plantbelleshop.co.uk



PURE AND SIMPLE
Natural Trellis,
(60 x 180cm), €25, De Wiltfang,
+31 (0)346 218 111, dewiltfang.nl



DECORATIVE DESIGN
Rusted Gothic Flower Trellis,
(150 x 60cm), £185, Secret Gardens Furniture,
020 8464 5327, secretgardensfurniture.com



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Loire Trellis,
(150 x 40cm), £29.99, Crocus,
01344 578111, crocus.co.uk

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Downtools

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Temple Guiting in the Cotswolds, with its long, gloriously planted borders, is one of the designs Jinny Blom discusses in her new book *The Thoughtful Gardener*, reviewed on page 105.

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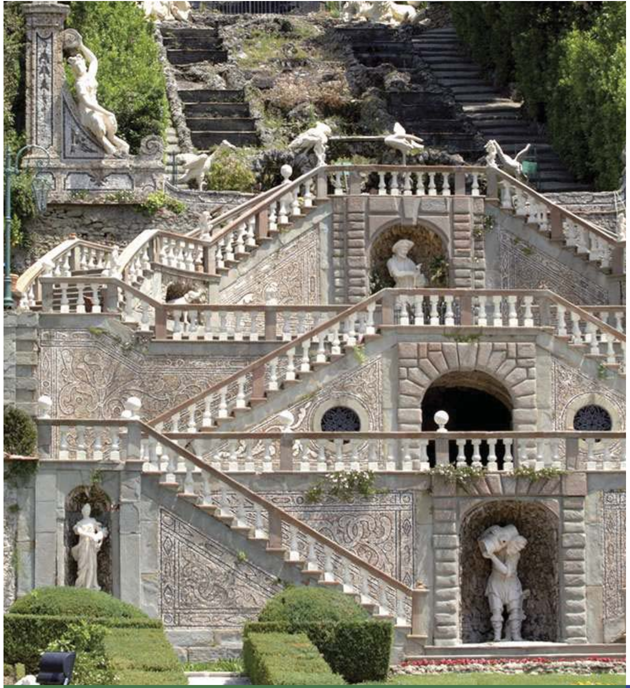

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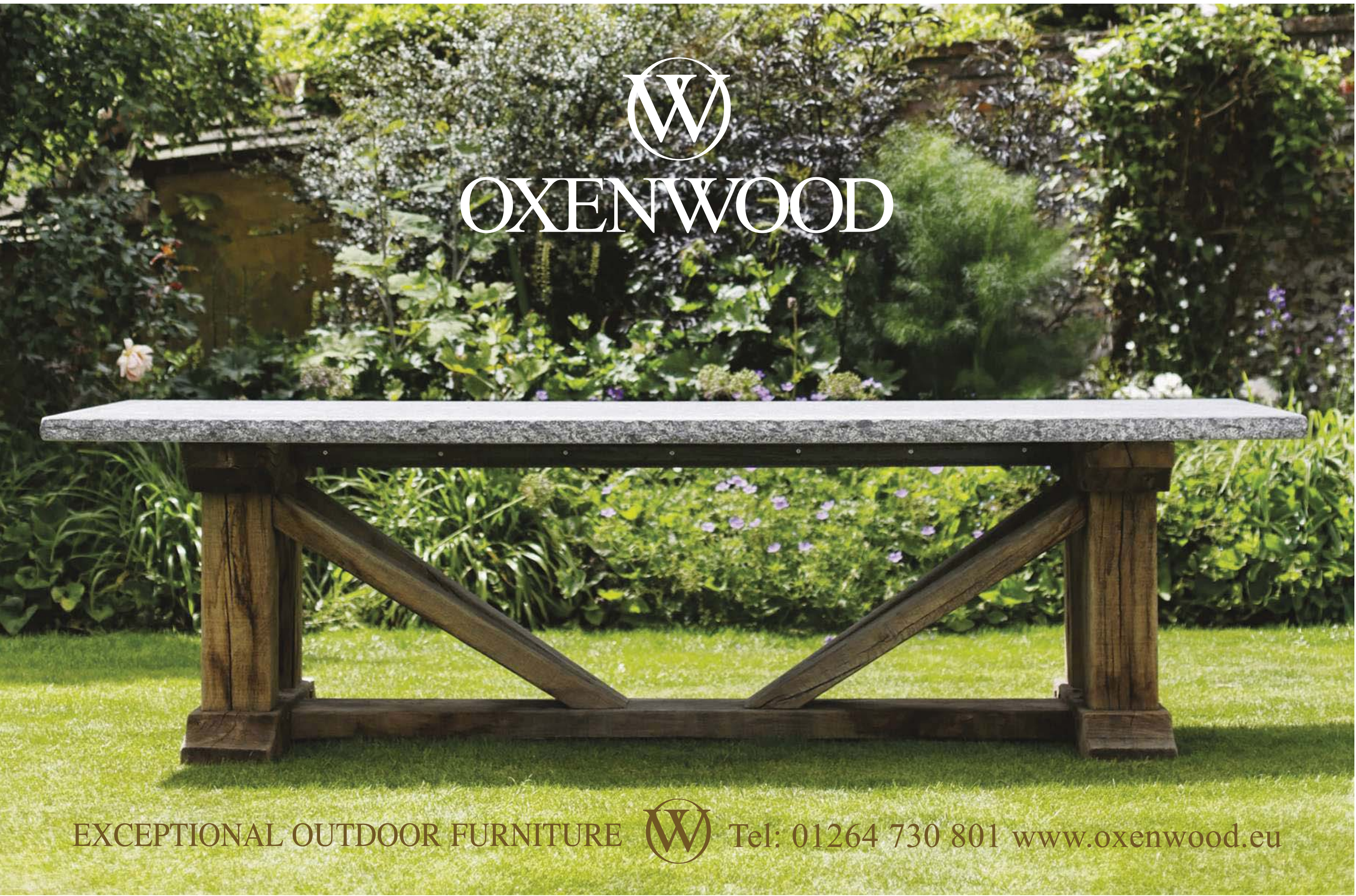

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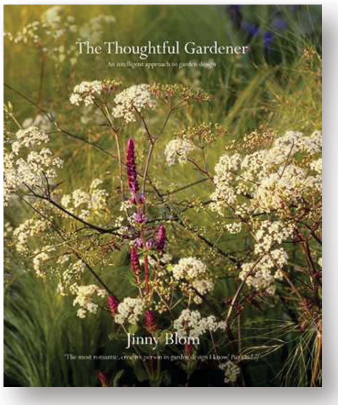


THE THOUGHTFUL GARDENER: AN INTELLIGENT APPROACH TO GARDEN DESIGN

by Jinny Blom
Jacqui Small, £35

ISBN 978-1910254592

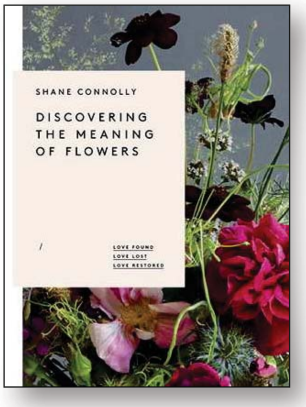
A detailed and richly illustrated account of how one of the UK's leading practitioners approaches the art of garden design.

Reviewer Annie Gatti is a garden writer and editor.

In her introduction to this sumptuously illustrated book, designer Jinny Blom sets out her intention to chart her progression from 'apprentice to journeyman to master craftsman'. Although she has always made a garden wherever she's lived, at 36 she took the bold step of quitting her job as a psychologist to become a designer. The apprentice section is short – she confronts her fear of making mistakes by mocking up her designs with canes and string to test out levels, wall heights and distances. Successive chapters give us a sense of what it must be like to employ Jinny, who has designed hundreds of gardens. First, your site will be exhaustively researched so that any links to its geographical or historical setting can be incorporated; you will be given hand-drawn sketches and mock-ups to help you visualise the new plan; and the planting will be chosen with consummate attention to its habit and horticultural requirements, and will most likely include trees, hedges, topiary, roses and gorgeous perennial combinations.

The scale of many of the featured gardens could be off putting for the rookie designer or garden owner – *Buxus sempervirens* 'Rotundifolia' arrives by the lorryload, lakes are five miles long. But intimacy is central to Jinny's designs and many of the images reveal serene spaces that could work equally well in small gardens. In the Cotswold garden at Temple Guiting, for example, it's fascinating to see how she achieves billowing successive planting in a border that's just one metre wide. The combination of sketches, plans and photographs further elucidate the text.

Jinny reveals that when she returns to gardens she has designed, it's the maturing structure she really loves. Read the book, and you will too.



DISCOVERING THE MEANING OF FLOWERS

by Shane Connolly
Clearview, £20

ISBN 978-1908337276

An informative and thought-provoking read for florists and plant lovers alike, packed with historical references and botanical facts.

Reviewer Juliet Roberts is the former editor of Gardens Illustrated.

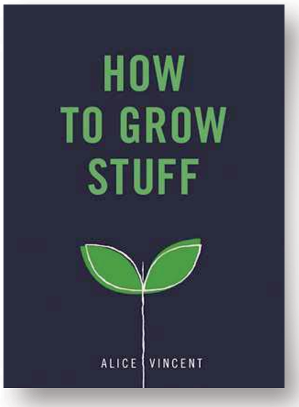
For centuries, people the world over have attached symbolism to plants. In the UK, poppies are associated with remembrance, red roses with love and daisies with innocence, and these connections have been celebrated throughout the ages: from the giving of real or paper plants, to the use of illustrated motifs on cards and works of art.

The first known dictionary of flower meanings, *Le Langage des Fleurs* by Charlotte de La Tour, dates back to 1819, and floral symbolism was commonly used to convey meaning for almost a century. However, since the First World War an increasing disconnection from rural traditions has meant that the language of flowers has gradually become lost.

Shane Connolly's latest book sets out to rediscover the language of flowers, examining ancient visual codes, and its relevance today. A highly regarded florist for more than 20 years, Connolly is probably best known for his work at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in 2011. He is passionate about celebrating nature's bounty and in this book he looks at over 50 plants and how they can articulate our feelings. Arranged into three main chapters – Love Found, Love Lost and Love Restored – the text is succinct and lively. Alongside beautifully styled photographs of individual specimens, Connolly includes a number of floral arrangements that combine the meanings of plants as a sort of multifaceted conversation in a bouquet. He also includes useful guides to creating such things as 'a crown of happiness' and a display for an 'amorous dinner table'.

Above all, this book reveals a subtle, enchanting form of communication that in our fast-paced world is surprisingly appealing.

Book reviews



HOW TO GROW STUFF
by Alice Vincent
Ebury Press, £12.99

ISBN 978-1785035593

A well-conceived book for budding gardeners that achieves its aim of remaining informative without being overwhelming.

Reviewer Alys Hurn is editorial assistant for Gardens Illustrated.

For arts and entertainment writer Alice Vincent, a love of gardening in four square metres of concrete, four storeys up has resulted in a regular writing gig for *The Telegraph's* Gardening section, a newsletter-style blog called *Noughticulture* and now her first book, *How to Grow Stuff*.

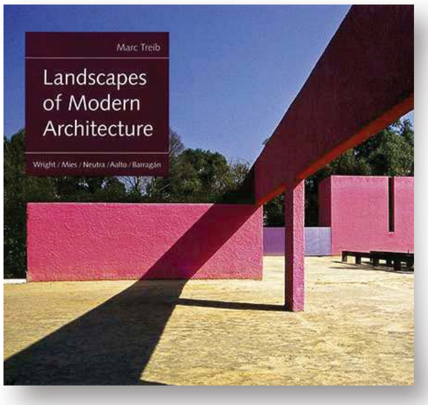
A self-confessed rookie gardener, Vincent has taught herself all she knows about urban gardening by making mistakes and learning as she goes. This book is for other budding gardeners who are keen to flex their green fingers but don't know where to start.

Her list of 'stuff to grow' is simple: a small selection of herbs, edibles, flowers and house plants suited to beginners. Her writing style is friendly and upbeat so it feels as though you're taking advice from a friend who has made all the mistakes so you don't have to.

She also makes sure to cover the basics with an introductory chapter on universal growing information, such as drainage, watering and potting on, and a glossary explaining the most common gardening terms from 'annual' to 'truss'.

Throughout the book, Vincent offers advice for keeping supermarket herbs and nursery-bought plug plants alive so there's no expectation to grow from seed right away. If you like a challenge, however, there are lots of tips and tricks to help you germinate your seeds successfully.

The pages have a matte finish that is rather appealing, but this muted look extends to the photographs (taken by Vincent herself) and makes the images of the plants and flowers growing on Vincent's balcony appear somewhat dull and grainy. But I'm nit-picking; this isn't a coffee table book, it's a practical guide that you'll want to keep close at hand throughout the year and dip in and out of as your plants grow.



LANDSCAPES OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE: WRIGHT, MIES, NEUTRA, AALTO, BARRAGÁN
by Marc Treib
Yale University Press, £45

ISBN 978-0300208412

An authoritative study of the relationship between architecture and landscape as viewed through the work of five architects.

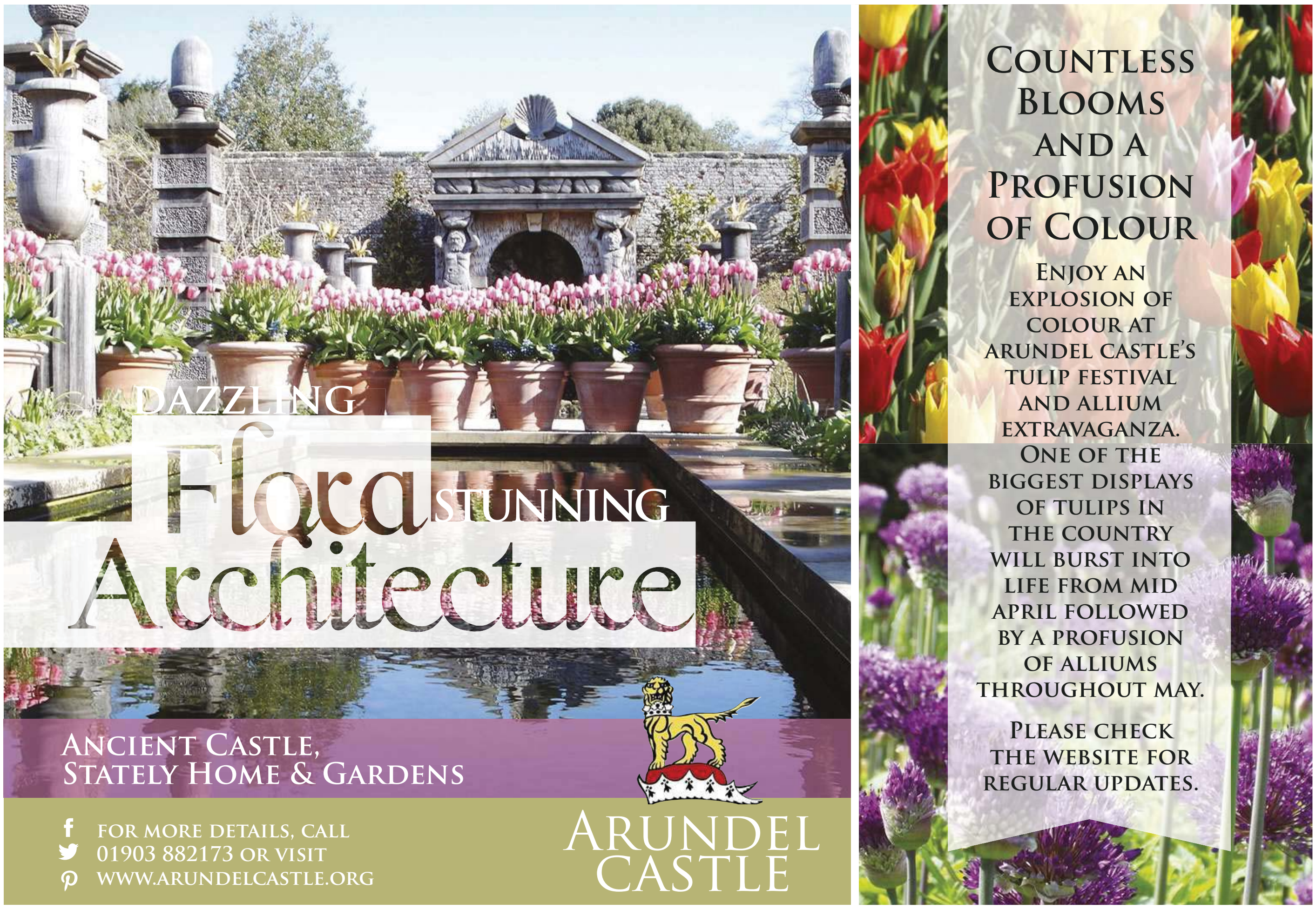
Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

The 'problem' with Modernist architecture, from a landscape point of view, has always been a sin of omission: the setting of the building is often considered merely as a green platform, or a quota of woodland to be glimpsed through floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

This book makes the case that leading Modernist architects (as opposed to landscape architects) have engaged with settings imaginatively, even if they have not always 'designed' them. Five 20th-century architects are covered in depth: Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, Alvar Aalto and Luis Barragán.

I did not need much convincing that Wright and Aalto (known for his use of the forest metaphor) had a strong landscape sensibility, although I am more sceptical about Mies's and Neutra's engagement with landscape. The author admits that Mies's seminal Farnsworth House – a glass-walled structure that seems to float above the Illinois woodland – 'appears inert, immobile and devoid of any appreciation of nature's textures'. His conclusion, that building and landscape are 'set in a curiously harmonious opposition', is insinuatingly persuasive. Less convincing is Neutra's 'picture-window' approach to landscape. The section devoted to Barragán is perhaps the most satisfying. Who could possibly decry Barragán's vision of the garden as 'a locus of personal reverie', or fail to be moved by the pink-walled stable yard at Cuadra San Cristóbal?

The text is well-written, though dense and at times repetitive. But no one is better placed to write this study: Marc Treib has spent his entire career elucidating Modernist architecture and landscape, and it is gratifying that the book does not overly flatter its subject.



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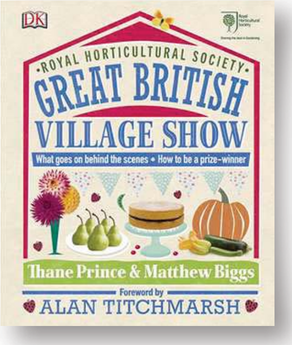
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GREAT BRITISH VILLAGE SHOW
What goes on behind the scenes • How to be a prize-winner
Thane Prince & Matthew Biggs
Foreword by
ALAN TITCHMARSH

RHS GREAT BRITISH VILLAGE SHOW: WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES AND HOW TO BE A PRIZE-WINNER

by Thane Prince and Matthew Biggs
Dorling Kindersley, £20

ISBN 978-0241255612

A practical, behind-the-scenes guide to all you ever needed to know about preparing for a British flower and produce show.

Reviewer Jojo Tulloh is a garden writer.

Borrowing from the name of the *Great British Bake Off* – the nation's favourite cake-baking contest – this book seeks to shine a light on every aspect of preparing for a country show, whether you're growing or making your produce, and would be just as useful for anyone organising a community, school garden or allotment show.

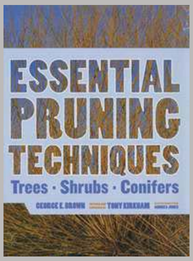
The mysteries attached to growing for the show bench can be hard to decode. If you've ever stared at rows of fruits and vegetables laid out with military precision – the onion necks tied with string, the carrots with long, clean, tapering roots – and wondered what on earth was going on, this book will explain. Each page has a photograph of the relevant fruit, vegetable, jam or cake displayed just as the judges would wish. There are tips on how to grow the perfect specimen, avoid defects, prepare your produce and score highly. I'll definitely be growing a giant pumpkin with my primary school gardening club. In the culinary section, there are recipes for all the traditional offerings, from scones and sponges to lemon curd and cordials. Thankfully the novelty class of animals made from various vegetables has not been overlooked.

Although the graphic design has a retro look, this book has more to it than nostalgia. Philip Larkin elegised the phenomenon of the show in his poem, *Show Saturday*, describing it as 'something they share / That breaks ancestrally each year into / Regenerate union. Let it always be there.'

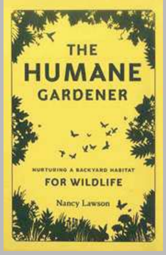
I can't imagine Larkin growing prize cabbages, but I feel he might have approved of a book that celebrates an annual expression of community and opens up the traditional skills of kitchen and garden to a new generation. □

Other books

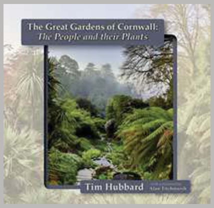
Five gardening titles that help capture the garden on camera, find hidden Cornish gems and improve your pruning skills.



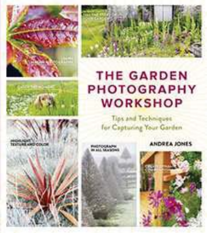
ESSENTIAL PRUNING TECHNIQUES
by George E Brown,
revised by Tony Kirkham
Timber Press, £35
ISBN 978-1604692884
A revised and up-to-date masterclass on pruning.



THE HUMANE GARDENER
by Nancy Lawson
Princeton Architectural Press, £16.99
ISBN 978-1616895549
Nancy Lawson explains how applying the lessons of ecology to our own outdoor spaces can help welcome wildlife to our gardens.



THE GREAT GARDENS OF CORNWALL
by Tim Hubbard
Alison Hodge, £9.95
ISBN 978-0906720981
A collection of the very best Cornish estates and gardens to visit, with a foreword by Alan Titchmarsh.



THE GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
by Andrea Jones
Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604696691
Tips and tricks to help you take the perfect garden photo, whether it's on your DSLR or smartphone.

MY TINY FLOWER GARDEN
by Matt Collins,
photography by Roo Lewis
Pavilion Books, £14.99
ISBN 978-1910904732
A selection of quirky ideas to help you create a perfect flower garden, whatever the size of your plot.

carlow garden festival

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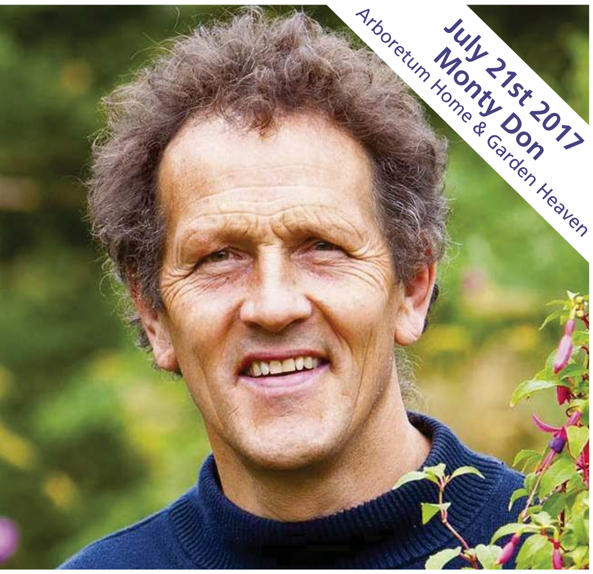
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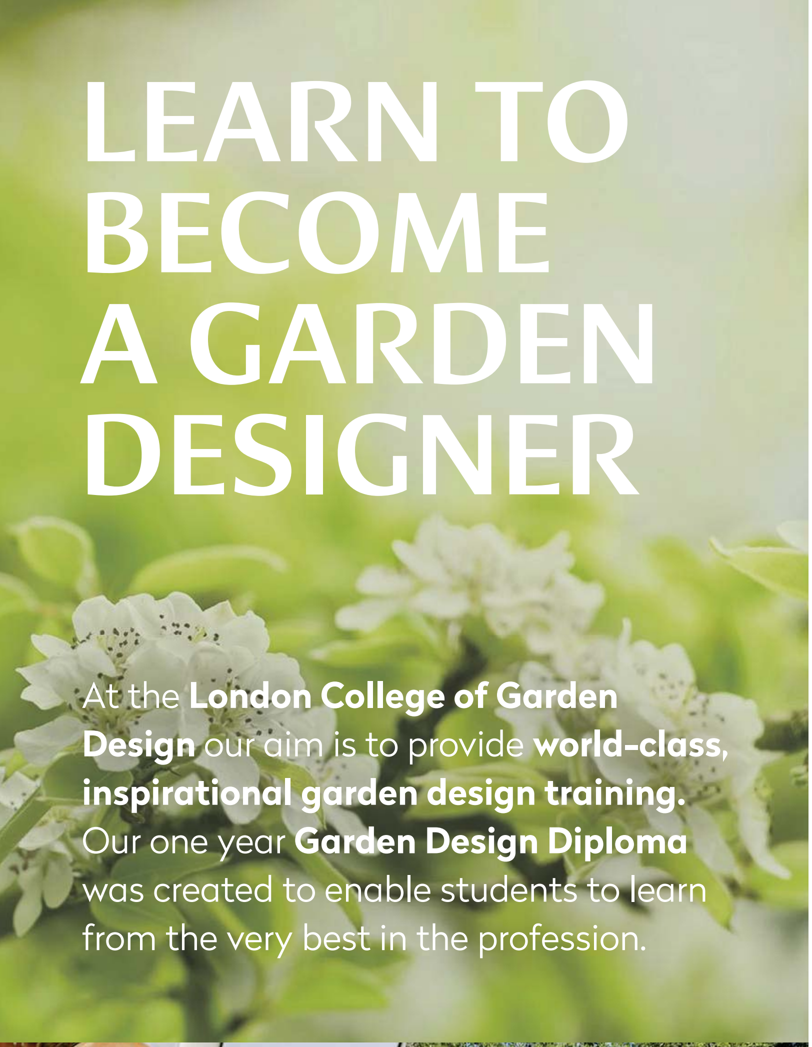

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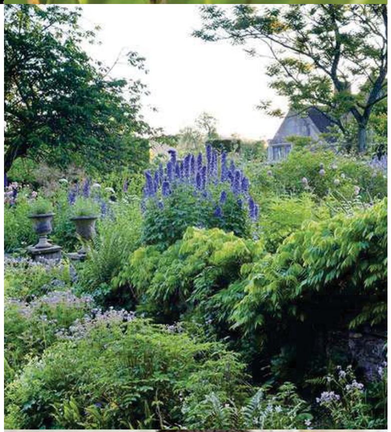

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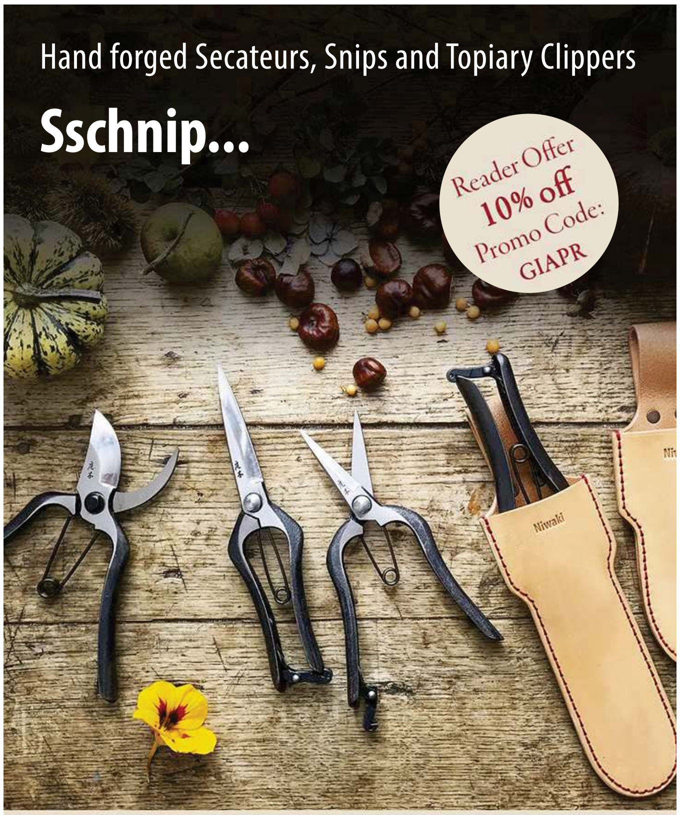

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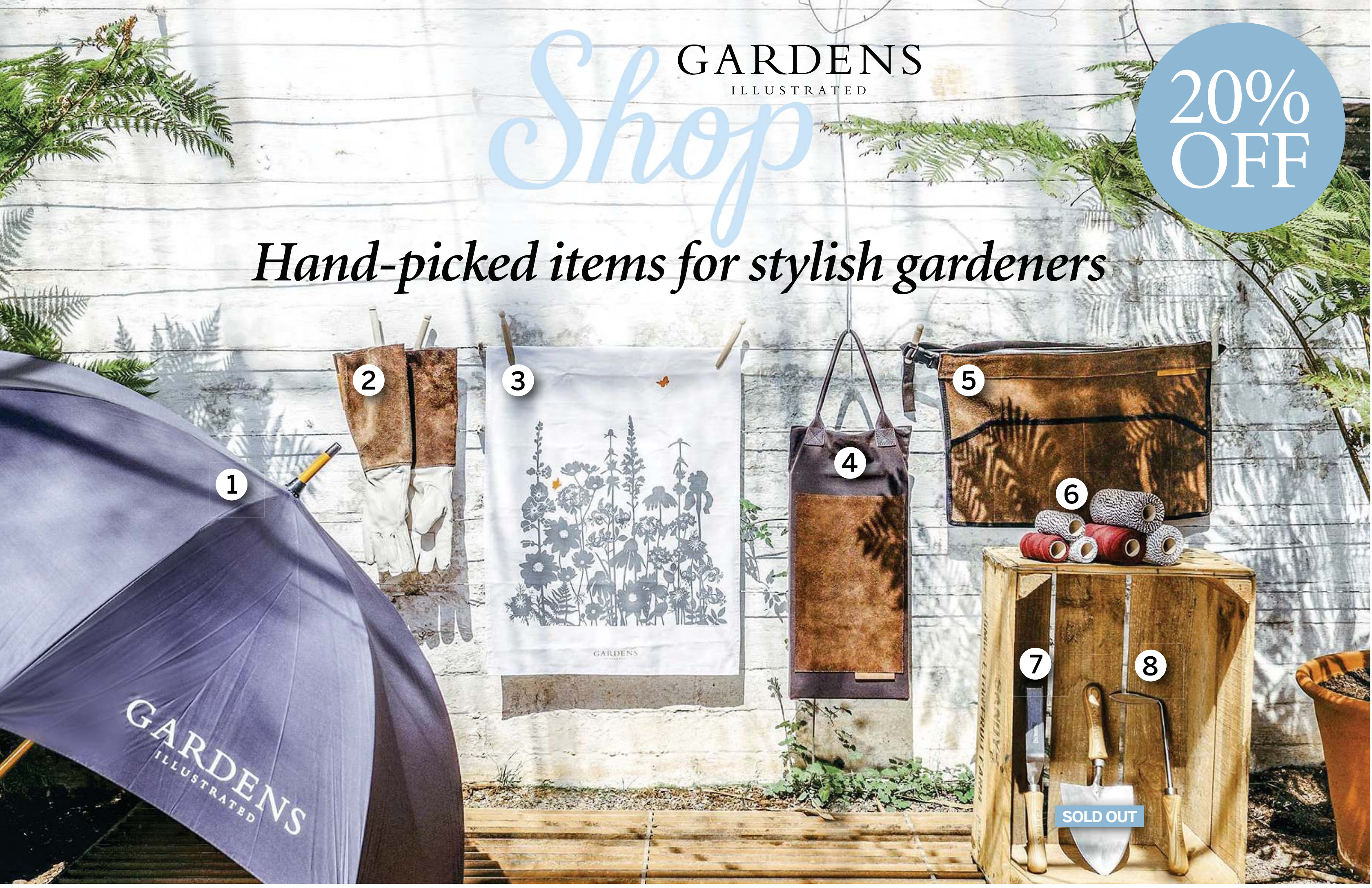

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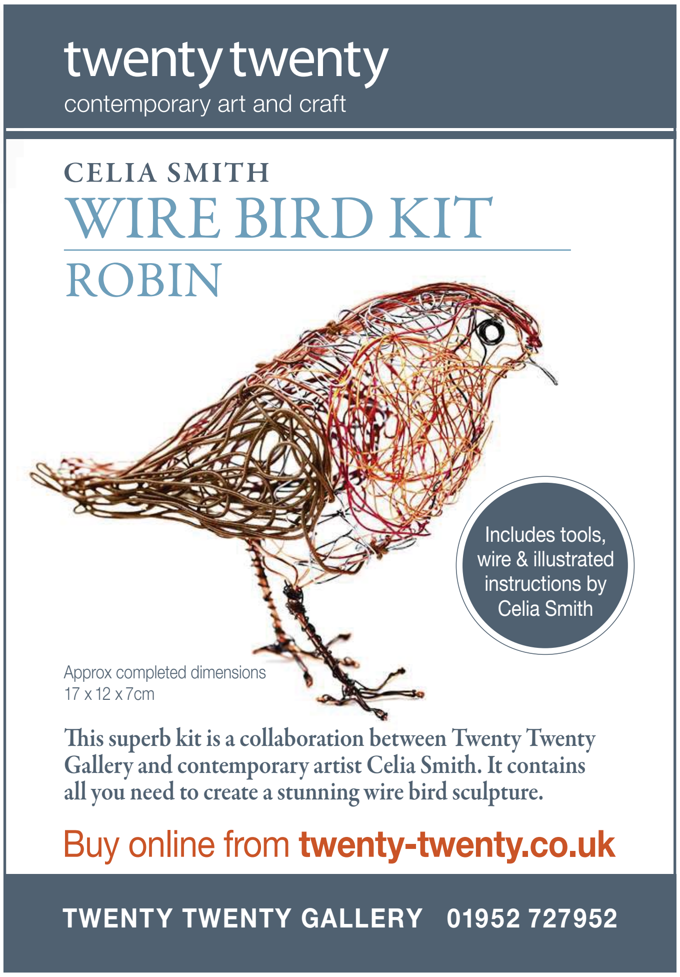

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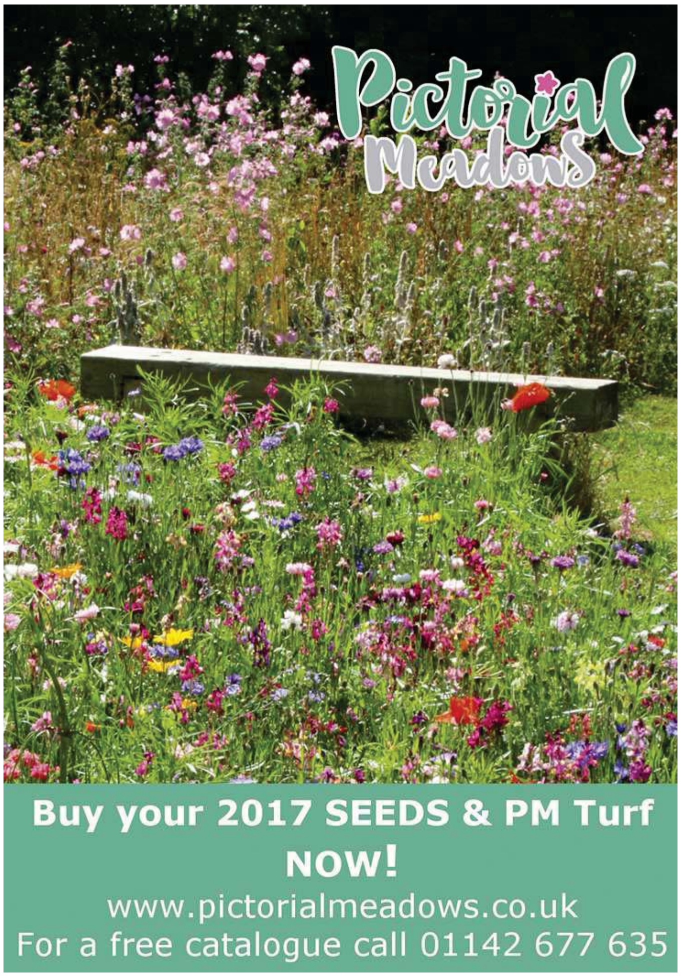

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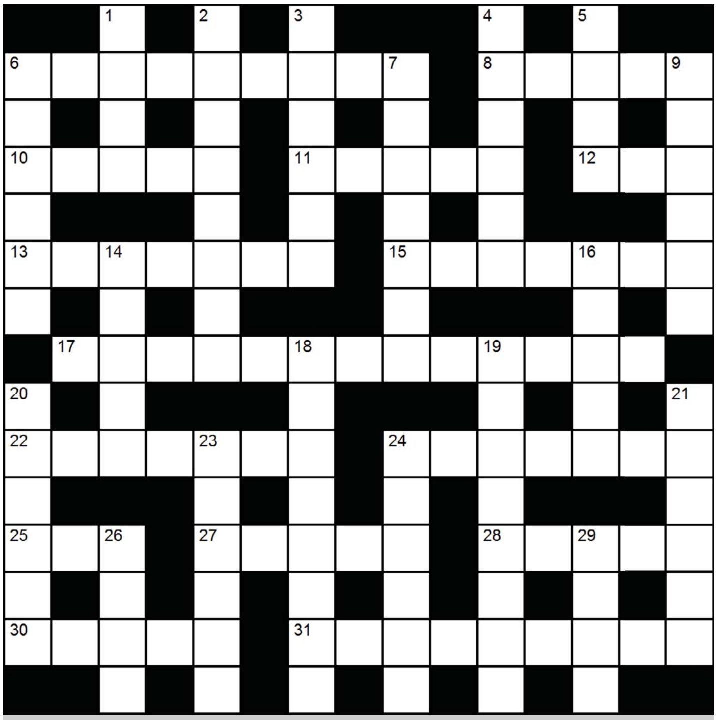


ACROSS

6 Spring flowers – after evening they're of a different genus! (9)

8 Victorian snowdrop fanatic producing 'Lewes' variety (5)

10 The garden pea genus – part of crop is umbelliferous (5)

11 Phyllis, original garden designer of Tintinhull House – eccentric, sires! (5)

12 Eg like water-retaining crystals – in spurge laurel (3)

13 Plant of the poppy family – any more different? (7)

15 Insect causing swelling on oak tree has cheek to take wing (7)

17 Genus of eg Christmas cactus… huge scrambler, all over the place! (13)

22 Small decorative magenta dahlia – a major flower in Ireland! (7)

24 Possibly oily as a genus of lemon verbena (7)

25 Form a line, it's said, for world-famous botanic gardens (3)

27 Sort of crop grown between two main ones – a drawback? (5)

28 As the 'Innisfree' primrose is – hard after flag (5)

30 Adam's needle or Spanish bayonet is a variety of this agave (5)

31 Uncertain about… description of leaf with backward-pointing lobes? (9)

DOWN

1 Hints: the most delicious bits of certain plants (4)

2 A 'button' Brussels sprout – historically a 'Roundhead'? (8)

3 In patios, try accommodating the genus of hop hornbeam (6)

4 Make fun of, initially low-growing, prickly headed plant (6)

5 Understand it's a tree shoot (4)

6 Like the bark of *Acer griseum* (6)

7 Possible constituent of gravel garden: hard, initially, inside one (7)

9 Genus of perennial climbers – wild sea holly (he removed) (6)

14 Dusty-mauve chrysanthemum provides a coffee drink (5)

16 *Dryopteris* plants – right inside wetlands (5)

18 Genus of Swiss cheese plant – gigantic one (8)

19 Showy pot plant with bell-shaped flowers – axil goin' haywire! (8)

20 Eg maple fruit has changed what's put in a lock? (3-3)

21 Du Maurier's first spring flowering shrub with tubular flowers (6)

23 Plant secretion attractive to pollinators (6)

24 Wise Greek goddess's vigorous white-flowering nerine (6)

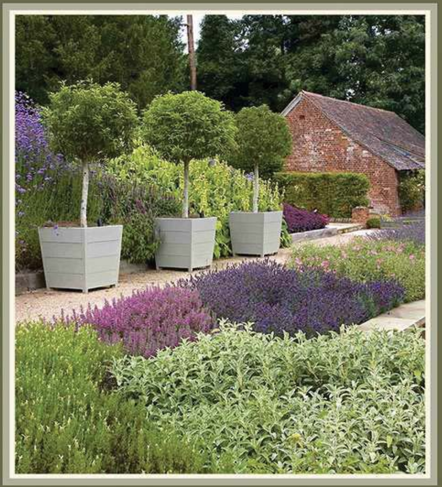
26 Scots elm, by another name – in showy Chelsea (4)

29 Magenta-flowered, mound-forming geranium – Ian holds five (4)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

MARCH'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 7 Cabbage palm **9** Rue **11** Espaliers **12** Ophelia **14** Orchard **16** Spirals **18** Samaras **21** Stigmas **23** Extinct **24** Blindness **26** Oscar **28** Eye **29** Saintpaulia.
DOWN 1 Oban **2** Nassella **3** Nepeta **4** Campions **5/10** Tree rings **6** Teased **7** Cordons **8** Malic **13** Heidi **15** Apron **17** Sesleria **19** Matrona **20** Setaria **21** Sable **22** Midas **23** Ensete **25** Ilex **27** Culm.



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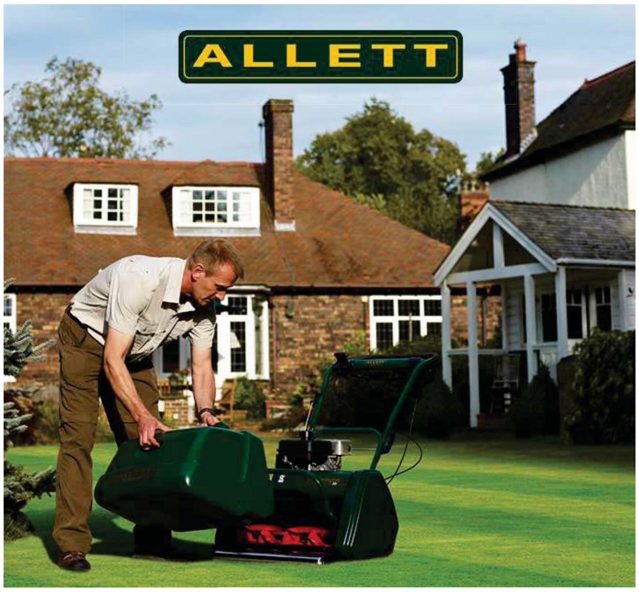

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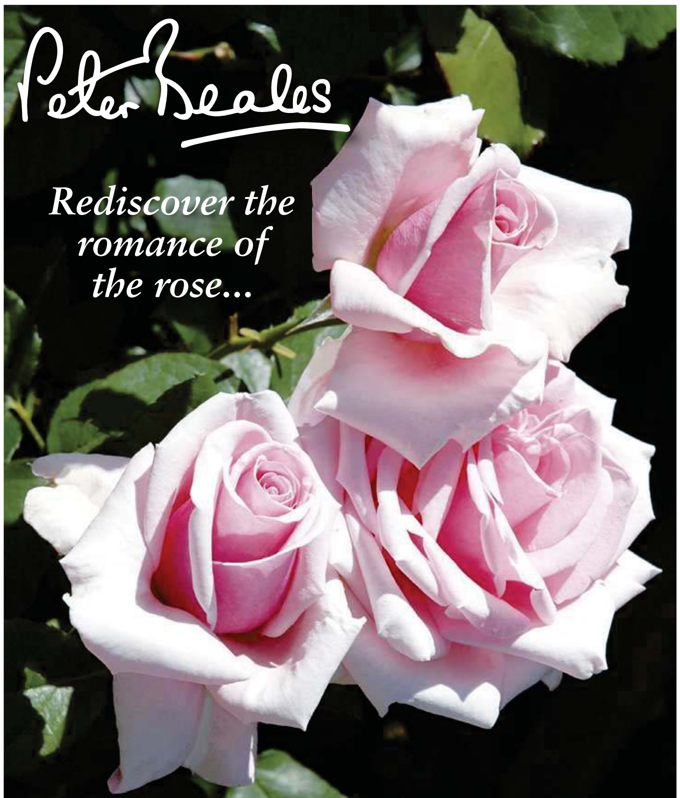

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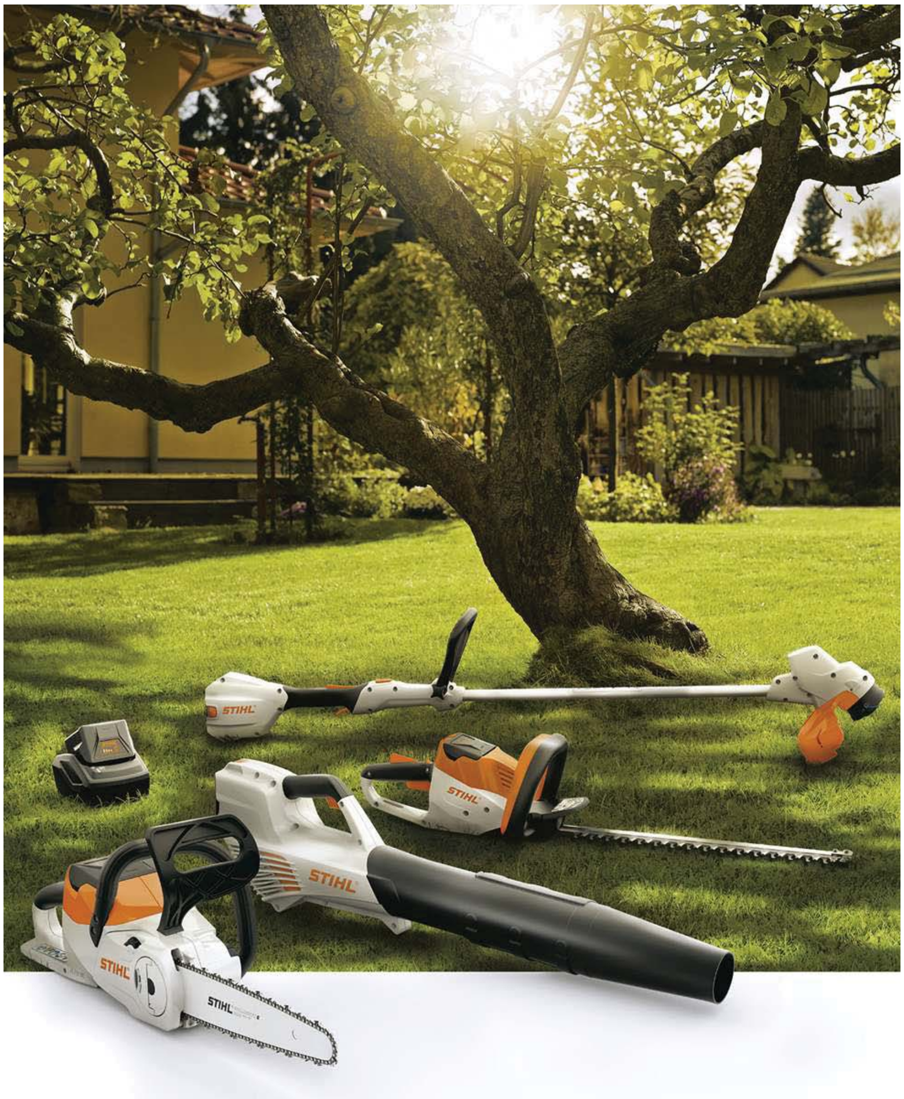

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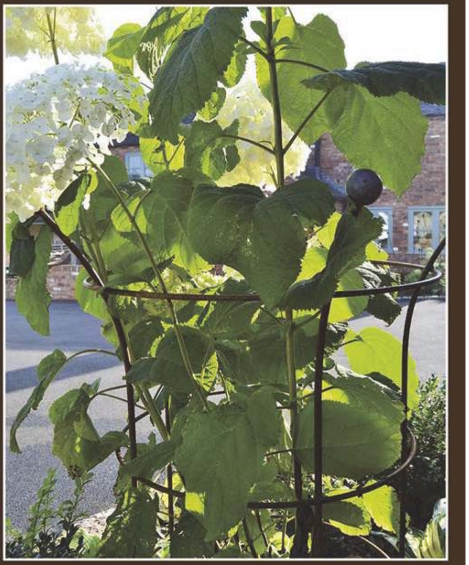

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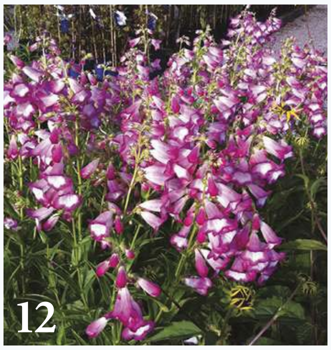
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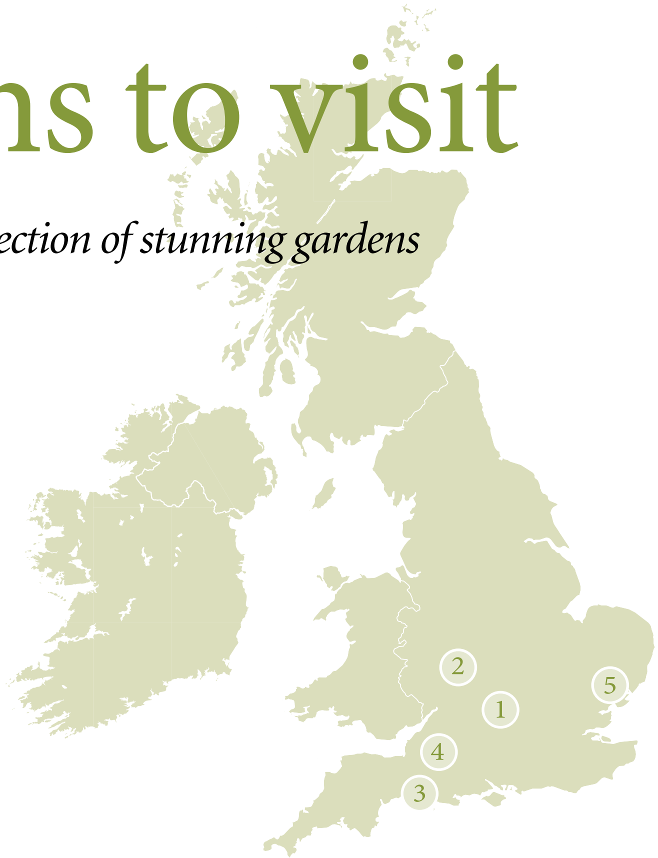

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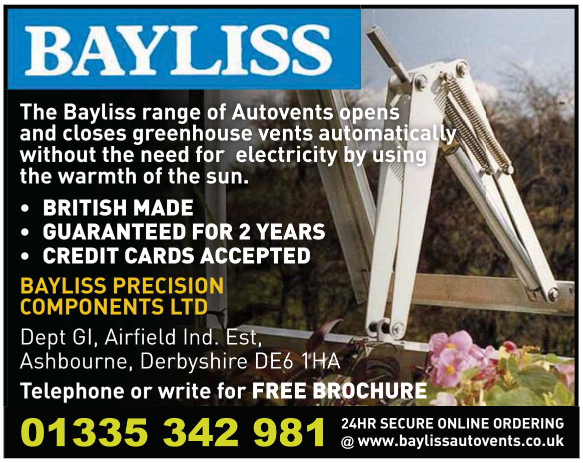

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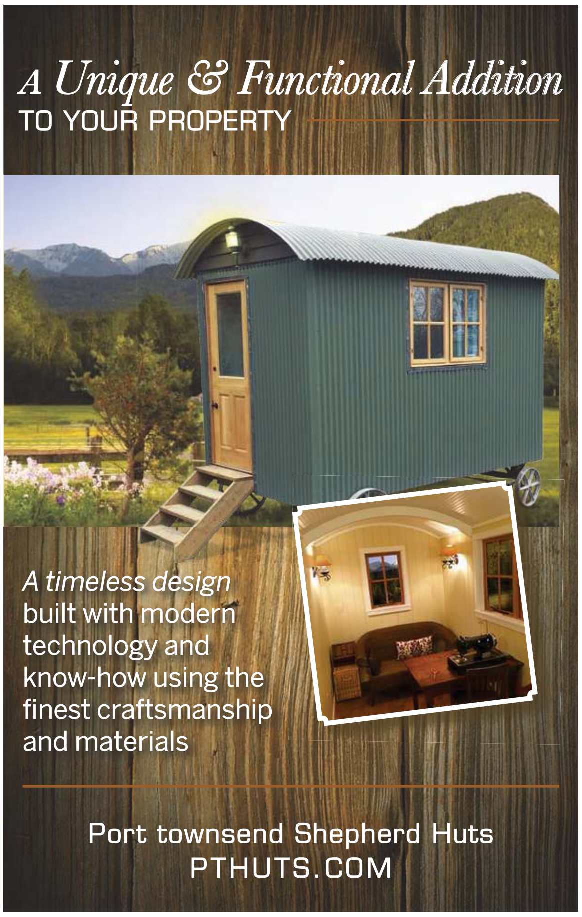
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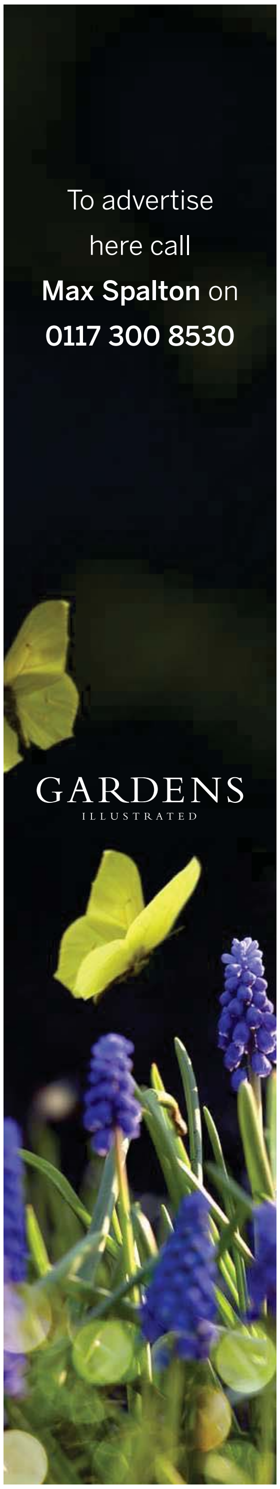
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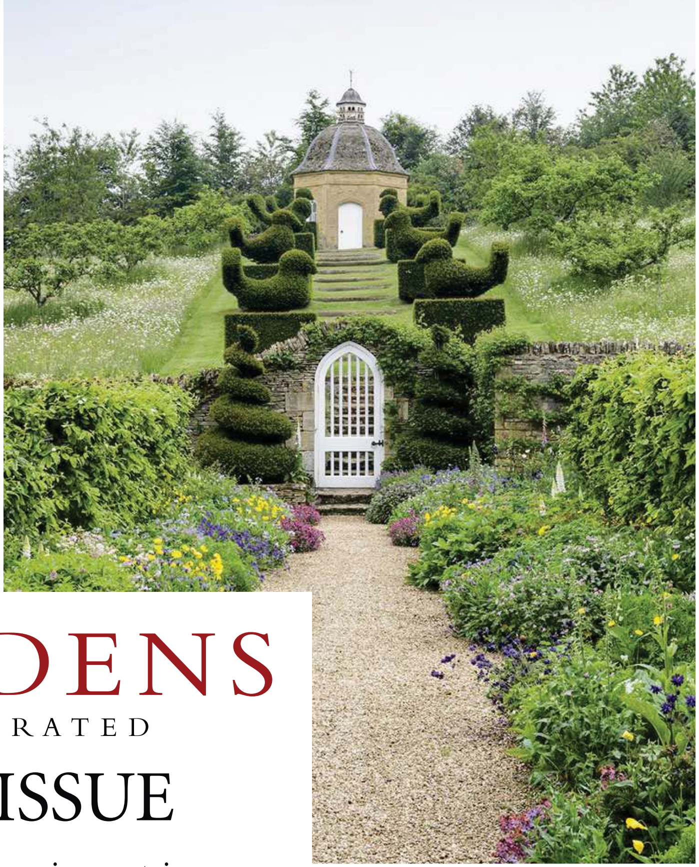

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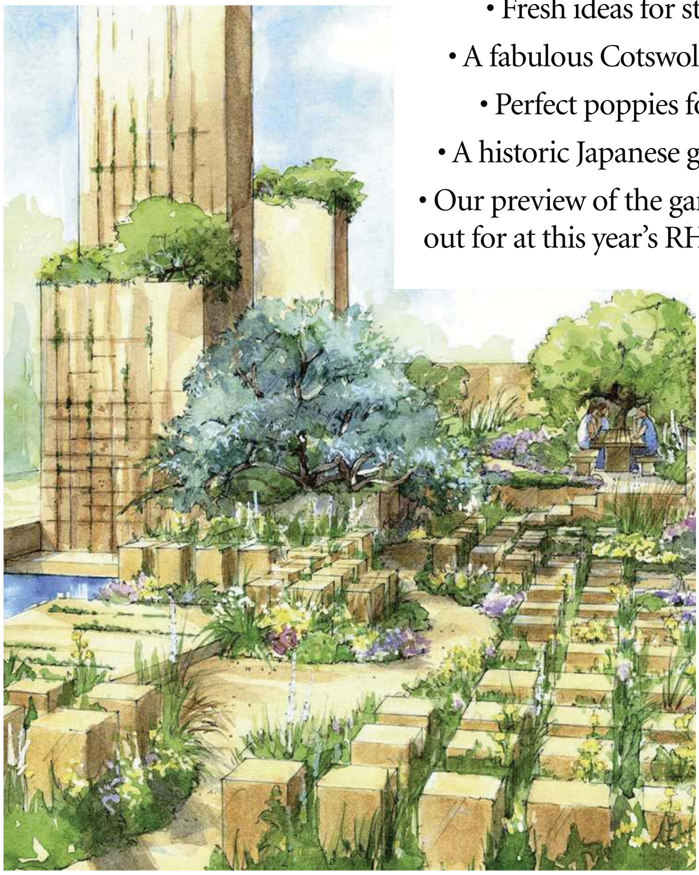
- Our preview of the gardens and trends to look out for at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show



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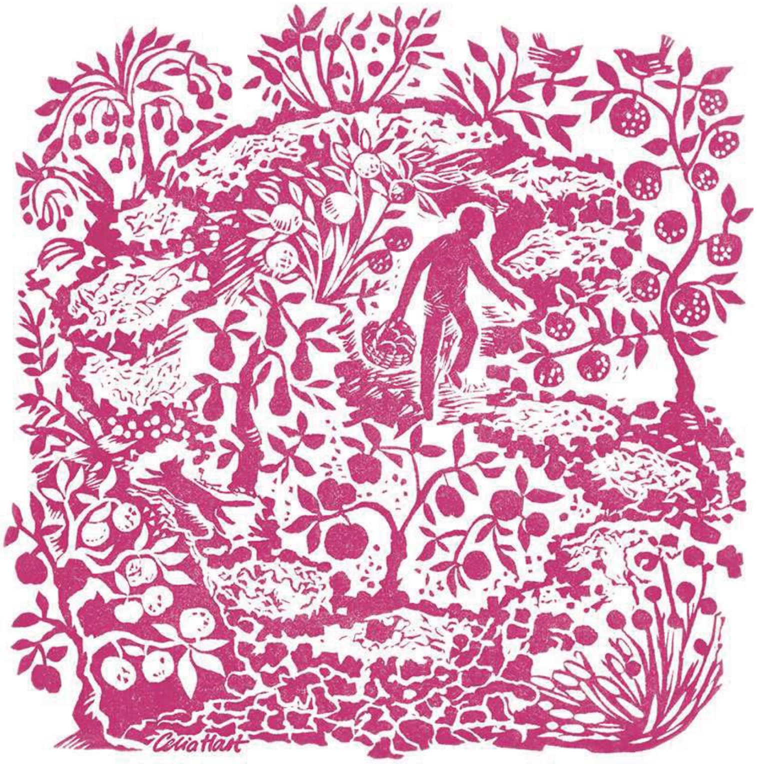
One step at a time

Much of Frank's Californian garden is lost to a vertiginous slope, but now he is slowly starting to reclaim the edges thanks to some resourceful recycling

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**



One day, it could all become a meandering descent, from which one could come back with baskets of fruit picked at elbow level

A slope, beyond a certain angle, begins to lose charm, from a gardening point of view. You might still be able to plant into it, and make something picturesque, but when you have to grab hold of branches to avoid teetering backwards during maintenance, and if the slope is lowest and steepest at the boundary, so that there is nowhere comfortable from where to stand and admire your picture, then the land is as good as useless except, perhaps, as somewhere to plant climbers that are best admired from above.

The Californian garden, although three times the size of the English one, is nearly two thirds wasted in this way. To begin with there was enough to do in the flatter regions for us not to have to think about it. We trimmed what trees there were to frame the good parts of the view and conceal the bad and, otherwise, the precipices were left on the long finger. The great urgency was to remove an expanse of pink concrete that blighted the front, and that, by accident, was what led to the terracing.

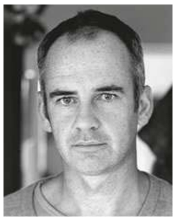
In England we would only have had to leave the piles of rubble at the gate and, within hours, farmers would have descended with front loaders to take it away and fill their muddy gateways. Here, one or two people expressed interest, but no one appeared and the nasty pile grew until it began to impede the turning of delivery vans, which took retribution in their avoidance by backing into shrubs.

Then I returned from a spell in England to discover that Miles had taken the initiative, and not only was the intruding pile much smaller, but the most immediately annoying slope had been made into a terrace, with the pink concrete of the wall facing, invisibly, away from us. From then on the recycling of concrete became his project. More terraces appeared, and the last of the paving was taken up in neat rectangles of five foot by three, to be formed into steps from one to the other. There have been no attempts to plant them – the good drainage they afford being the last thing a plant would want in this climate. They are topped with crushed granite and used to enjoy the plants that are put about them.

I have a tendency to think only of plants, and when structures occur to me they are there to serve plants. I will delve for dampness and raise for drying, but would never think of changing the shape of the landscape for the sake of improvement. In fact, I tease friends who are in the landforming business about the vanity of their trade. Most human intervention does not make for beautiful scenery but, now that I think of it, terracing might be a noble exception.

There is something touching about small fields impossibly high on a mountain, cut just level enough for a bred animal to stand and graze, or paddy fields, or tiny walled vineyards. Something reassuring too that they can only go so far and that ultimately the slope wins and the mountain exults over them. The terrace might show our ingenuity in adapting the environment to us, but it also shows where the border of our cleverness lies and, in a slightly pathetic way, how desperate we are to claw what we can. Perhaps not so noble; merely aesthetically acceptable.

But, in the garden, we don't have to reflect in quite such an existential way. Terracing could be no more than a good solution to getting about without having to reinforce the seat of your pants. The pink concrete was soon spent and there is plenty more slope that never gets ventured on. It would be nice to think that, one day, it could all be levelled and stepped to become a meandering descent and climb, from which one could come back with baskets of fruit picked at elbow level. If we were that desperate to get the most from every inch. ☐



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

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